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THE PHILOSOPHY OF F. H. JACOBI

A THESIS

ACCEPTED BY THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF CORNELL UNIVERSITY
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, MAY, 1902

BY

ALEXANDER W. CRAWFORD, A.M.

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
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CHAPTER I.

LIFE AND WRITINGS.

Jacobi lived in one of the most stirring political and literary periods of German history, and in the most important period of modern philosophy. He lived through the era of the French Revolution and of the Napoleonic Wars, and was a contemporary of Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing in literature, and of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel in philosophy. In addition to the contemporary influences which these names represent, the effects of earlier movements were still manifest in many ways. The religious influence of the Reformation was continued in Pietism, under the shadow of which he passed his earlier years. This early training gave a decidedly religious tone to his life, and to all his philosophical work.

It is probable, too, that this movement had much to do with the general reaction against the rigid rationalism of the *Aufklärung*, which set in when Jacobi was a young man. This tendency found its clearest expression in Hamann's *Gefühlsphilosophie*. It was undoubtedly this movement which led Jacobi to extend sympathy and help to the new Romanticism, with its simpler and healthier views of the world and of human life. Never before had literary and historical criticism assumed such importance; for it was largely through these, in the first instance, that the strength of Romanticism was expressed. Mysticism, too, was still alive and an active force in society, and especially in religion. Jacob Boehme, indeed, had given it some standing in philosophy, and it was now destined to have a much larger place. This was due to the fact that it had passed beyond the stage of physical excitation, and of a mere rule of life, such as it was in Eckhart and Tauler and to some extent in Boehme, and had adopted a rationalistic procedure. An *intellectuelle Anschauung* had taken the place of the earlier emotional intuition; and this had raised mysticism from the position of a mere individualistic rule of life to that of a philosophical doctrine or universal principle. This Jacobi eventually developed further than any of his predecessors.

*His Life.*¹ Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi was born at Düsseldorf on

¹ The account of Jacobi's life is taken chiefly from Zirngiebl, *Jacobi's Leben, Dichten und Denken* (Vienna, 1867), from Adamson's article "Jacobi" in the

the 25th of January, 1743. He was the second son of a wealthy merchant, who was engaged in the sugar industry. His father was a strong Protestant, and the boy was brought up in that faith. Jacobi seems to have possessed from early youth a deep religious sense and a certain mystical tendency. Referring to himself as the author of *Allwill*, he says: "Therefore, already as a youth, the man was a visionary, a phantast, a mystic."¹ In a similar connection, he refers to Pietism, and acknowledges its influence upon him.² It is related of him that, as a boy, instead of playing with other boys, he would often stay in the house and converse with a pious old maid-servant of the family. As a mere child he thus showed an interest in religion, and even in the solution of certain religious problems. At the age of eight or nine he had intuitive views of immortality which ever remained with him.³ In *Allwill* he tells of an experience of rapture, a sort of mystical experience, which he had in early life.⁴ His faculty of intuition was thus very strong. He says that in early life he could not realize the existence of anything he could not intuit, or place before his senses in imagination. This reminds one of Berkeley, who could not realize the actuality of anything which he could not individualize.⁵

Jacobi's father intended him to follow a commercial career, and with this end in view sent him, at the age of sixteen, to Geneva, to complete his studies. Here he remained four years. He had spent his early life under the influence of religion (Pietism), but at Geneva he first came in contact with philosophy. Sensationalism was the dominant philosophy there at that time, and he first approached the subject from that side. This led him to see an opposition between philosophy (or science) and faith, which he never afterward could reconcile. It became the business of his whole later life to try to adjust, though not to reconcile, their respective spheres.⁶ The influence of the empirical school was, however, negative. He grasped the enthusiasm rather than the theories of its adherents, and was most moved by that which was illogical in them, but which he felt was most true to the realities of life. His teachers here were Bonnet and Le Sage; and he also read Rousseau, Voltaire, and others. But neither the scepticism of Voltaire nor the sentimental deism of *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and from Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany* (Philadelphia, 1870).

¹ Jacobi, *Werke*, I, p. xii.

² I, p. 33.

³ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁴ I, p. 24.

⁵ Cf. Fraser, *Selections from Berkeley*, p. 3.

⁶ Pünjer, *History of the Christian Philosophy of Religion*, Eng. trans., p. 621.

Rousseau appealed much to him. He was driven rather to seek a philosophy which should not only acknowledge God and things divine—supersensible truth—but one which should also have a place for a God and a faith, as living, ever-present, realities in life.

After finishing his course at Geneva, he married, in 1764, Betty von Clermont, a lady of Aix-la-Chapelle, who was very beautiful and accomplished. In addition to "her great personal and mental attractions," she brought him considerable wealth. She seems to have been an excellent woman, highly esteemed by all who knew her. Goethe, in his *Memoirs*, speaks of her in terms of praise.

Jacobi now took his place at the head of the mercantile house which was handed over to him by his father. But this did not prove congenial to him, as he had no taste for business. He therefore soon betook himself to literary and philosophical work, which was better suited to his meditative disposition. He accepted, however, an election to membership in the Council of Juliers and Berg, in which connection he became famous for his financial ability and his zeal in social reform. His interest in social and political questions is shown by his writings on these subjects, which constitute the sixth volume of his collected works.

Jacobi and Wieland founded a new literary journal, *Der Merkur*, in which were published some of his earliest writings, including, among other things, his *Allwills Briefsammlung* in 1774. In 1779 he published *Woldemar*, a philosophical novel of no great merit, though interesting as a statement of his earliest views, and as an illustration of his philosophical method. His temperament, as seen in these early works, is literary rather than philosophical; he is satisfied with reaching truth by a sort of intuition, and does not seem to demand a complete rationalization of principles. He was familiar, however, with philosophy, past and present, and saw as well as anyone the short-comings of the current speculations, though at this time he could offer no deep philosophical contribution. He saw that life was larger than the current philosophy could provide for, and that theory had not attained to the fulness of faith.¹ Without critical examination, then, he took the principle of faith, which he saw had so large a place in religion and in life, and tried to give it the dignity of a philosophical principle; though in his later years he examined it more carefully, and substituted an intellectual element for the feeling element which characterized his first presentation of the subject.

In the same year (1779) in which he published *Woldemar*, he became a member of the privy council at Munich. He proved

¹ Cf. Lotze, who said that life was larger than logic.

energetic; "but the exposure of the abuses of the Bavarian system of customs was attended with consequences which rendered that post uncomfortable."¹ He therefore returned to Pempelfort, where he applied himself with exclusive devotion to literature. The death of his wife broke in upon the peacefulness of his labors, and threw a gloom over his remaining years. He kept up his home at Pempelfort, however, and during the next few years produced some of his most important writings, among which was his *Briefe über die Lehre Spinozas*, 1785, in letters to Moses Mendelssohn. This first brought him into relation with contemporary philosophy, as it was his first truly philosophical work. It was called forth by a conversation with Lessing, in which the latter declared that he knew of no philosophy which could properly be called such, except Spinoza's. This led Jacobi to make an extended and careful study of Spinoza, which resulted in the work above mentioned. This celebrated conversation has been preserved for us by Jacobi.²

In 1789 Jacobi published a second edition of his work on Spinoza, greatly enlarged, and with added appendixes. In this we find the first clear statement of his opposition to a philosophy of demonstration, as distinguished from a philosophy of faith, which he avowed. He thus identified himself with the *Gefühlphilosophie* of Hamann and Herder. This put him at once in opposition to the leading philosophers of the time, including Mendelssohn, who was looked up to as chief. These all misunderstood him, and thought he was trying to reintroduce into philosophy the antiquated notion of unreasoning belief. They called him an enemy of reason, a Pietist, and even a Jesuit in disguise. So careless was their examination of his writings that they thought he advocated a doctrine of unreasoning faith and dogmatic authority.

In reply to this charge he published a dialogue entitled *David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus*. In the preface he protested against being regarded as an advocate of a blind faith, and as an enemy of science and philosophy.³ He endeavored also to vindicate his use of the words 'faith' and 'belief,' by showing that these terms had been used by eminent writers, especially by David Hume, in the sense in which he himself was now using them, and that there were no other words to express the immediate cognition of facts, as opposed to the construction of inferences. In an appendix to the second edition of this work, he first expressed himself on

¹ Hedge, *Prose Writers of Germany*, p. 206.

² IV, a, pp. 53 ff. For an English translation of the conversation, see Sime, *Lessing*, Vol. II, pp. 300 ff.

³ II, p. 4.

Kantianism, and showed his intense keenness of criticism. He here set forth his realism in opposition to the Kantian philosophy, which he interpreted as subjective idealism.

At the outbreak of the war with France, which followed close upon the French Revolution, Jacobi left Düsseldorf, and lived for nearly two years in Holstein, the native province of his father. While there he made the acquaintance of Reinhold; and from there he published, in 1801, his first important work on Kantianism, *Ueber das Unternehmen des Kritisimus die Vernunft zu Verstände zu bringen*. In this he developed more fully than in the appendix to *David Hume* his position with reference to what he thought to be the subjective idealism of the Kantian system.

It was while living here that he was accused of atheism at Jena, probably on account of his partial acceptance of Kant's Dialectic. In order, then, to set himself and his philosophy in the proper light with reference to theology, he published an apologetic letter, *Jacobi an Fichte*, in which he tried to define his position with precision. Nothing was further from him than atheism. Instead of being its supporter and defender, he was its most determined opponent. All his efforts were directed to establish theism; and the principal charge he made against Spinozism was that it was atheistic and fatalistic.

Soon after returning to his home at Düsseldorf, he received a call in 1804 to the new Academy of Science just founded at Munich; and as he had lost part of his paternal fortune through a brother-in-law, he was induced to accept the position. In 1807 he was made president of the Academy, and remained in that position for four years. While there he published his last philosophical work, *Von göttlichen Dingen*, which he directed chiefly against Schelling. The latter made a bitter reply, which Jacobi never noticed, though the controversy was carried on by others, chiefly Fries and Baader.

In 1812 he retired from the presidency, and began to prepare a collected edition of his works, but died, March 10, 1819, before he had completed the task. The work was continued, however, by Köppen, and was completed in 1825. It was published in six volumes, the fourth volume containing three parts. The second volume contains an Introduction by Jacobi which is at the same time the best introduction to his philosophy, and the most succinct and lucid statement he ever made of his general position. It is to this edition of his works that all references are made in this monograph.¹

Jacobi was not a philosopher of set purpose. His first writings

¹ The paging of the *Vorrede* of the 1812 edition varies in different copies, though the body of the works is the same.

contained merely an implicit philosophy of life, and it was only later that he was driven to an endeavor to render that philosophy explicit. He was a busy man of affairs for many years, and his writings were but occasional treatises,—“written rhapsodically and at grasshopper gait,” as he says, and, for the most part, in the form of letters, dialogues, and romances. “It was never my object,” he says, “to construct a system for the schools; my writings sprang from my innermost life, they followed an historical course; in a certain way I was not the author of them, not with my own will so, but under compulsion of a higher and irresistible power.”¹ His philosophy, more than that of almost any other philosopher, was primarily his personal view of life, and only secondarily did it become a system of principles.

Jacobi seems to have been a man of most admirable personal qualities. He had very deep social feelings, as is evidenced by the fact that he made his mansion at Pempelfort a resort for literary men. He was also intensely religious, though there seems to be no evidence that he interested himself very greatly in any contemporary ecclesiastical affairs. Love for God and man went together in him, and were the united cause of all his philosophical thought.

We shall endeavor to trace very briefly the influences which met in him, and which went to shape his character, and to give content and form to his philosophy.

Pietism. The deep religious movements of Germany have nearly all been associated with, or have been the outcome of, some form of mysticism. There were mystics such as Tauler and Eckhart before the Reformation, from whom the chief inspiration of that movement came. Luther himself was a mystic, and drew much inspiration from Staupitz. Then came Boehme, one of the most profound thinkers ever found in the ranks of the common people. His mysticism was broad and deep, and he was sufficiently philosophical to give some real character to his thought. The movement of which the Pietism of Jacobi's day was the product was begun by Philip Jacob Spener (1635-1705), and was at first a movement within the Lutheran Church. It took the form of a protest against the formalism which had been developed within the Church, and which threatened to destroy its real spirit. Its chief characteristics, therefore, were deep spirituality, an emphasis upon experience rather than knowledge, upon immediate intuition rather than mediate thought, and upon the importance of the individual.

¹ Quoted by Schwegler, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. trans. by Stirling, p. 249.

² Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-2.

It was therefore "rather a religious mood than a form of thought."¹

Spener also placed much emphasis upon conversion, or the renewal of the natural man by the spiritual.² This naturally meant an antagonism between the natural and the spiritual,—an antagonism which Jacobi inherited and which always remained a very marked feature of his view of the world. In the same way, the other features of Pietism, and of mysticism generally, entered deeply into his thought. To the end he remained strongly individualistic or empirical, valuing direct and immediate intuitions above the richest content of mediated thought, and was never able to overcome the opposition between the natural and the spiritual man, or between nature and mind. This will be seen in his permanent dualism between knowledge of mechanical nature (or science) and knowledge of the supersensible or spiritual world, which he chose to call philosophy.

Such a view of the world of nature and man undoubtedly complicates the philosophical problem, but it is nevertheless the basis of all true spiritual or religious life. It was the source of the truest and deepest life of the church, and furnished the only true experiential basis of the doctrinal aspect of Christianity. This cannot precede, but must follow upon true religious life, and it was from this sort of life that the doctrines of the Reformation historically sprang,—those doctrines which mark the spiritual emancipation of our modern world. Under these influences Jacobi spent the earlier years of his life, and it was from these that he drew his conception of the world and of life.

Sensationalism. This was the first philosophy which Jacobi read at all carefully. Previous to his term at Geneva he had read but little,—only what the ordinary school-boy reads. But at Geneva he came in touch with French Sensationalism, through the *Encyclopædia*, which at that time had its stronghold there.³ Then began his serious study of philosophy. Le Sage was his teacher, and Jacobi says that his acquaintance with him marks an epoch in his life, and that his year with him was the most fruitful he ever spent.⁴

It was a strange contrast,—a Pietist in the midst of the materialistic movement of the time,⁵ and one of the most thoroughgoing materialistic movements in the entire history of philosophy. Jacobi was thus led into very serious mental and spiritual struggles, and it

¹ Wilde, F. H. Jacobi: *A Study in the Origin of German Realism*, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 14–15.

³ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, pp. 5–6.

⁴ II, pp. 182–3.

⁵ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

is probably due to the fact of being thrown on his own spiritual resources that he had his "fruitful year." He was forced to a more careful and positive study of the spirit than ever before,¹ or than was at all usual with young men of his years. He studied Le Sage, Bonnet, Rousseau, Voltaire, Diderot, and Durand; though he seems to have been most in sympathy with Rousseau.² The others furnished him little positive material for his own thought. He seems to have been satisfied with their general philosophical method; for it is only their results which he criticises, and this only when they come into the sphere of the supersensible. He seems never to have called in question the validity of their method in the sphere of what we now call the science of nature. In this field, however, he never showed any interest,—the things of the spirit were his only attraction. The method of this school he accepted as the only method for exact science; and as the whole procedure was to him very barren, he opposed it only when it was carried over into the region of spirit. It was thought by some that he opposed science as such; but it was only the scientific method in philosophy which encountered his opposition. A science of nature he thought quite possible, though he left it for others to pursue; but a *science of spirit* he considered in the nature of things forever impossible.

The science of the sensationalists daily taught him that all things were idle and empty,³ and that there was nothing substantial but matter. But this could not satisfy his soul; for his faith in God, and love, and virtue, which he had held from his youth up, was more to him than this, and could not be explained away. In the field of the sensible, however, the science of the sensationalists seemed to him to be indisputable, while faith in God seemed equally indisputable in the field of the spiritual. This left him forever with a discord between head and heart, though to him "the stirrings of the pious soul were of far more importance than the cognitions of the understanding."⁴

Jacobi may have found reason for such a dualism even among the sensationalists themselves. For instance, Bonnet did not accept the coarse materialism of the *Encyclopædia*, though he was a Sensationalist. He did not say, as others did, that thought was motion, but that motion in the body was the occasion of thought in the immaterial soul. Moreover, he regarded the mind as substantial, and

¹ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

² Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, Eng. trans., p. 310.

³ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁴ Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 621.

proved it from the unity of consciousness.¹ So that even within the school itself there were indications which might point Jacobi to the view which he developed,—a dualism between head and heart, between science of the sensible and faith in the supersensible world. Instead of offering any thorough-going criticism of their method in general, the only way he saw was to endeavor to limit it to the field of the science of nature. How this affected his own view of nature, and of the value of natural science, we shall see later. We shall also see that it constitutes his own greatest philosophical limitation.

Aufklärung. After his return from Geneva to his native land, Jacobi found himself under the influence of the Enlightenment, both as a form of culture, and as a philosophy of life and of reality. The earlier dogmatism of Spinoza, Leibniz, and Wolff did not influence him until a later time; but the dogmatic rationalism of the *Aufklärung*, though an outcome of the earlier dogmatism, was a factor in the life of his time, and was, indeed, the prevailing type of thought. Although looking for its speculative support to Leibniz and Wolff, this was its least important side; it concerned itself more with the practical affairs of life. “The basis of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was given in the general features of a *secular view of life*, as they had been worked out during the Renaissance by the fresh movements in art, religion, politics, and natural research.”² Its theology was deism, and its religion was rationalism,—it “made a negative reduction of what was positive in religion to a so-called Religion of Reason.”³ It “enthroned ‘sound common sense’ as the supreme arbiter, flouted all mysteries, discredited the deeper experiences, ignored the graver questions of the soul, and bounded its views by the narrow horizon of every-day life.”⁴ It thus exalted the knowing reason of the individual, and set itself up as the supreme arbiter of all things. It thought it found within itself all that was necessary for knowledge or for life. Its God played no real part in life, but was merely the speculative principle from which all things proceed, and was accordingly completely transcendent.

Such a movement could have only a negative influence upon the very positive spirit of Jacobi; for he was opposed to it from the very outset. Its view of God, its denial of mysteries, its quite unpoetic and rationalistic view of life, were repulsive to him, and

¹ Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, Eng. trans. by Tufts, p. 458.

² *Ibid.*, p. 438.

³ Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 650.

⁴ Hedge, *Hours with German Classics*, p. 194.

entirely unsatisfactory. It left man no mystery to himself; it really cut off as illusions all his deeper spiritual experiences and yearnings, and left him with only an ideal which was 'of the earth, earthy.' And though at one with this movement in its belief in a personal God, he could not, however, accept the artificial and mechanical schism which it made between God and the world. He held that God and the world were organic to one another, and that a vital relation must subsist between the two. This relation he conceived it the chief business of his philosophy to show. No positive contribution to Jacobi's thought can therefore be attributed to the *Aufklärung*; but it stirred him up to opposition, and to a more explicit formulation of his own peculiar philosophy.

Spinozism. Shortly after Jacobi's return from Geneva he first came in contact with Spinozism. In 1763 the Berlin Academy prize for an essay "On Evidence in Metaphysical Knowledge" was awarded to Moses Mendelssohn. Jacobi greeted the essay with great pleasure, but was disappointed to find that it was little more than a restatement of the old dogmatic arguments for the existence of God. He regarded this type of method as looking back to Leibniz and Spinoza,—to their mathematical method of demonstration. But Jacobi had learned to look on things with the eye of the Empiricist, and distrusted all demonstrative methods. His conception of philosophy as faith, or belief, or intuition, had begun to take form in his thought.

But it was not till after his famous conversation with Lessing in 1780 that he gave any very careful consideration to Spinoza. Then for some years he carefully studied that philosopher, and in 1785 gave the results of his study to the world in the form of the *Briefe über die Lehre Spinozas*, addressed to Mendelssohn. He found himself completely opposed to Spinoza, and to all philosophy of that type. The method of demonstration appeared to him to be its chief characteristic,—an attempt to deduce the fullness of the universe from one primary principle, in Spinoza's case the principle of substance.

The science of mathematics was in Spinoza's day developing rapidly. Descartes, Leibniz, and Newton had made wonderful discoveries, and the atmosphere of the whole educated world was largely mathematical. Mathematics appeared to be the true type of science, and it was thought that all true science must conform to this model, as the only way in which results could be exact, or could be proved. Modern inductive methods had not yet come into vogue, though Bacon had some time previously called attention to induction, and had to some extent outlined its methods. It was but nat-

ural, then, that the philosophical sciences should endeavor to adopt the mathematical method. It was not thought that the difference in subject-matter called for any difference in method of treatment. Accordingly, Spinoza proposed to himself the task of demonstrating Ethics in geometrical order. Starting out with the concept of Substance, with its attributes and modes, as the geometer does with the concept of the triangle with its sides and angles, he endeavored to deduce, or demonstrate the entire universe, including right and duty.

This method determined by opposition that which Jacobi should adopt. The mathematical method he thought proper enough for the sciences of nature; for, to him, nature was mechanical. Moreover, he always associated demonstration with a mechanical method; for, to him, demonstration was mathematical, not logical. But, since he viewed man as a free personality, and spirit as something radically different from nature, he could not see that in this sphere mathematics could be applicable in any way. And since spirit did not admit of exact measurements, therefore a philosophy of spirit could not be a mathematical, or an exact, or a demonstrative science. An attempt to apply the exact method to supersensible objects, he thought, would inevitably lead to a denial of the very objects with which it started. This was shown clearly in the case of Spinoza and others, who started with God as substance, but came at last to such a view of God as denied any conscious personality, and was, indeed, nothing but atheism and fatalism. This led Jacobi to the opinion that a demonstrative system of philosophy was impossible; and in consequence he was driven to seek the opposite method of direct intuition. So that his study of Spinozism did not make a positive, but only a negative contribution to his thought. It led him to feel confidence in faith, and to formulate his views of mind and supersensible things upon an intuitive and non-mathematical basis.

Criticism. When in 1781 Kant published his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Jacobi had already reached most of his philosophical conceptions. But his study of Kant's great work gave form, if not much content, to his thought. The *Æsthetic*, in which Kant endeavored to show the subjectivity of the forms of space and time, Jacobi conceived to be complete subjective idealism. For if space and time are but subjective determinations of our thought, then the objects which we conceive to be in space and time are equally subjective. The fact that we conceive them to be truly external does not in any way make them such, but only proves that along with the ideas of space and time and objects, we have the idea of the externality of those objects. This does not give real externality, but

only the 'idea' of externality. Jacobi was in search of some real objectivity, and was thereby led to formulate more completely than ever his doctrine of realism. For he conceived that the problem of philosophy was to find a real objectivity, not only for the objects of our sense perception, but also for the objects of our supersensible perception. This latter was the problem of an objective theism, which Jacobi conceived to be the most fundamental and the most far-reaching of all problems.

The categories of the understanding, which Kant found to be the presupposition of a science of nature, were likewise held to be determinations of the knowing subject, and at the same time applicable to objects as phenomena. They were not, however, applicable to objects as noumena, such as the self, freedom, and God. These never entered the world of phenomena, but had their real being behind the world of sense objects. They belong to the sphere of reason, and the laws of the understanding are not applicable to them. Therefore all arguments employing the Categories are equally incapable of either proving or disproving these Ideas of Reason. An examination of these Kant took up in the Dialectic. But Kant found that in pure reason there might be a faith in these objects, which, however, looked for its support to the practical reason, where there was rational ground for holding to their reality. This became a positive doctrine to Jacobi, who had long before concluded that a demonstration of divine things was impossible. For a time, however, he thought Kant's position denied these in the Pure Reason, only to affirm them in the Practical Reason. This, he conceived, would be an impossible proceeding. But he came later to think that Kant meant in the Pure Reason neither to deny nor to affirm them; while in the Practical Reason he did clearly affirm them. This Jacobi accepted as the true account; and it helped him not only to formulate his own view of faith, but it helped him, likewise, to see more and more that such a faith is not so much feeling as reason. We can notice, therefore, throughout his writings an increasing tendency to give a thought-content to his act of faith.

Gefühlphilosophie. Up to the time of Jacobi, the usually accepted division of mental activities was the Aristotelian bipartite division of theoretical and practical, or understanding and will (including desire). But about this time it began to be felt that this was not an exhaustive division. Baumgarten, Meir, and Sulzer had indicated that this division did not provide a place for the sensations of pleasure and pain, the agreeable and the disagreeable. In 1776 Tetens definitely and with conscious explicitness proclaimed the

discovery of another coördinate power, Feeling, and declared the proper division to be into Feeling, Understanding, and Will. This division was accepted and established by Kant, and has remained the almost unquestioned division throughout subsequent philosophy.¹

While this division was being established, there was another movement which arrived less consciously at a somewhat similar result. The Rationalism of the *Aufklärung* had about spent itself; its inadequacies were beginning to be seen. It had virtually made all existence to consist in universals, and from the days of Spinoza had, accordingly, found great difficulty in providing for individual existences. A static pantheism was its logical result. Against this movement, which was beginning to collapse from its own inherent weakness, there sprang up what has become known as the *Gefühlsphilosophie*, or, otherwise, the Faith-Philosophy. Of this the first explicit advocate and exponent was Hamann, the most prolific writer was Herder, while its clearest interpreter was Jacobi.²

These men conceived that, as existence was individual and not universal, philosophy must be able in some way to grasp these individuals, as they are the only true beings; for only in conceiving these can philosophy conceive the truth. It is not enough, they said, to grasp the concepts of pure scientific thought; the individuals must be known. The true is the only basis for truth, for only as the true is experienced can the truth be known. The scientific concept appeared to them to be an abstract universal, and as such was inadequate to contain the wealth of concrete experience. The only alternative they could see was the concrete individual, for as yet the concept of a concrete universal was unknown to philosophy.

They therefore endeavored to overthrow the doctrine that concepts contain the truth; for as they understood the term, concepts certainly could not contain the fulness of real being. Only in feeling, which was purely individual and concrete, could such individuals be known. All knowledge, then, starts from individual existences, and philosophy deals only with individual essences. This feeling (or faith, as it was likewise called) contains all the world of reality; for by it all individuals are known, and besides individuals there is nothing. This knowledge, however, for the very reason that concepts are abstract, cannot be put into dogma or doctrine, but must remain a matter for the individual soul alone. This mystical individual is opposed to both orthodoxy and rationalism, and contents itself with

¹ Cf. Major, *The Principle of Teleology in the Critical Philosophy of Kant*, pp. 1-16.

² Falckenberg, *History of Modern Philosophy*, Eng. trans., p. 310.

the bare assertion of the content of its feeling. It is, indeed, "a conscious un-philosophy."¹

The points which these philosophers emphasized are thus seen to be two: First, that all existence is individual, and that therefore all knowledge must be of individuals; and second, that feeling, not concepts of the understanding, is that by which real existence is known. This, it is seen, amounts not only to an acceptance of the new third element of mind, but to its elevation to a place above the other two, the understanding and the will. The *Gefühlsphilosophie*, therefore, represents the extreme reaction against the rationalism of the current philosophy of the *Aufklärung*. What drove them to this extreme was, probably, the desire to conserve the actuality of God, who in the *Aufklärung* had become a mere name, an abstract universal. Kant, on the other hand, accepted the three elements, but left them coördinate factors of mind. That Kant's position was the truer there can be but little doubt. But that the philosophy of feeling contained an element which was a valid protest against the prevailing Rationalism, we shall endeavor to show in the following chapters.

Jacobi started from this standpoint, which he held in common with the other members of the school. But, as we shall see later, he worked somewhat away from this; for though continuing to hold to their doctrine of immediacy, he came more and more throughout his writings to admit a thought-content in the place of the bare undifferentiated feeling. In this he moved away from the school with which he started, and pointed the way to the more adequate view. In so far as he did this, he prepared the way for Hegel, by showing the inadequacy of the earlier philosophical concepts, and of the earlier view of thought in general.

Romanticism. In Germany, Romanticism was a protest against the hard rationalism of the *Aufklärung*, which had attempted to give a somewhat mathematical account of man, as of some material object. But it was more than a mere protest. It felt the mystery of life, the inexpressible mystery of spiritual existence, and endeavored to give it some expression, however inadequate. Romanticism voiced those hidden aspirations which cannot be measured and catalogued, those deeper feelings which do not readily yield themselves to exact treatment. It was, therefore, not so much a definite philosophy as a *Zeitgeist*, which found expression quite as much in art and literature as in philosophy. The human spirit had become conscious of itself as such, and found that it was possessed of emotions and ideals which could scarcely be expressed in concepts,

¹ Windelband, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Band I, p. 572.

or which, at least, had never yet found any such expression. It was essentially a movement in which actuality was regarded as dwelling in concrete experiences, rather than in what was considered abstract thought. Schlegel said that those best comprehend truth who have experienced the most moods.¹ All things were interpreted with reference to the needs and spiritual interests of man. Thus did Schelling interpret even nature. It found the depth of reality in the human spirit; and in the experiences and revelations of that spirit all truth was known. The world of sense was but the inadequate expression of the hidden soul of things, in which alone was complete reality.² Romanticism was, then, essentially a return to a spiritual view of things, to a recognition of the reality not only of thought but of feeling. But it could not long find satisfaction in mere spiritual experiences; it rapidly passed into every form of expression, though most readily into art and literature. And when the knowing mind had thus asserted its right to a share in the mental life, the movement gave rise not only to philosophical theories, but likewise to theories of art and literature and history which have greatly enriched the modern world.

With this movement Jacobi was in hearty sympathy, and from it he received much inspiration. Its spirit and purpose were the same as his own, as is seen in the fact that his earlier writings were all romances. He felt the richness of experience, but felt that it could not be put into concepts, *i. e.*, he felt that so far as the understanding was concerned there were great mysteries in human experience. So he held to the opposition between head and heart,—though we are inclined to think that this meant less and less to him as, in the course of his career, he was driven to attempt a formulation of his doctrines. But the opposition never entirely disappeared. He always thought that the heart had deeper experiences than the head could reduce to concepts.

The influence of Romanticism upon Jacobi, then, was to impress upon him the rich content of experience,—the spirituality of life and its forces. For he did not feel that this life could find adequate expression in terms of mere intellect. In this particular he felt very strongly the influence of the Faith Philosophy; for though Romanticism gave him inspiration, the form of his philosophy was largely conditioned by his relations to the Faith Philosophy. But, as we shall see as we proceed, he was not consistent in this even in his early life; and in his later life he departed from it still further. This is seen by his use of the word 'reason' where he had

¹ Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 176.

² Cf. Hedge, *Martin Luther*, Essay on "Classic and Romantic."

formerly used 'faith,' showing that he recognized the element of thought even in the deeper experiences.

WRITINGS. His chief philosophical works are as follows:

Allwills Briefsammlung, 1774.

Woldemar, a philosophical novel, 1779.

These two are "in essence one and the same." The revelation of this essence takes a double direction, once as fiction in *Allwill*, and again as actuality in *Woldemar*. It has been maintained by Zirngiebl that these two works are the only genuine philosophical works of Jacobi,—that they are the only ones in which his poetic view of things found adequate expression. For where philosophy is only a living power of the soul, and not a system of doctrine, these are the only forms in which it could truly express itself. They are, therefore, "not only the truest mirror, but the only true key to the heart-philosophy of Jacobi."¹ But, as we maintain, there was another element in his philosophy, which became increasingly prominent throughout his life, and which alone entitles him to rank as a philosopher, and which is seen better in some of his other works.

Briefe über die Lehre Spinozas, 1785.

David Hume über den Glauben, oder Idealismus und Realismus with an Appendix *Ueber den transzendentalen Idealismus*, 1785. Kuno Fischer regards this as his most important work. It is in the form of a dialogue between the author and an interlocutor.

Briefe über die Lehre Spinozas. Second edition, containing important appendixes, 1789.

Ueber das Unternehmen des Kriticismus die Vernunft zu Verstehen zu bringen, 1801.

Von den göttlichen Dingen, 1811. This was directed chiefly against Schelling.

Werke, a complete edition of his works in six volumes, upon which he was engaged at the time of his death. It was completed by Köppen, 1812-1825.

¹ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-8.

CHAPTER II.

JACOBI'S STANDPOINT AND PROBLEM.

Jacobi's general standpoint was virtually adopted while under the influence of religious Pietism, and before he had given himself seriously to philosophy. His philosophical reading and reflection but led him to develop this standpoint, which may be called spiritualistic empiricism. He believed that all knowledge comes by actual experience, but that experience is more than mere sensibility. The supersensible is as much the object of experience as the sensible, both alike being given in immediate perception. The present chapter will indicate the manner in which he developed this standpoint.

As we have already seen, Jacobi's interest in philosophy was more than the interest of the mere scholar. His purpose was to find a method of knowledge, not for its own sake, but for the spiritual rest which he hoped could be thus obtained. The contemplation of the world was, to him, a means to the life of the spirit.¹ Like Spinoza, he was convinced of the vanity of all merely worldly pursuits and aims,² and with this thought in mind, gave up the mercantile life in order to pursue more directly the life of the spirit.

His philosophy, accordingly, was not, in the first instance, a product of rational thinking, but the expression of his powerful feeling and his deep spiritual life. It was his own individual *Weltanschauung*, and did not constitute a complete theoretical system. It was first implicitly contained in rhapsodies, correspondences, and romances, and only at a later time was made explicit in philosophical treatises. Throughout it all he fully acknowledged a supreme religious purpose, saying that he did not write for the purpose of mere science, but with a distinctly spiritual purpose.³ He further said that he did not intend to construct a philosophy for the schools; for his philosophy was that of his own head and heart, and not according to truth in general.⁴

Jacobi himself anticipated the objections which may be made to his doctrines on the ground that they are the expression of his personal life and character, and that therefore they do not spring from

¹ IV, a, p. xv. Cf. Zeller, *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie*, p. 438.

² Spinoza, "On the Improvement of the Understanding," Eng. trans. by Elwes, Spinoza's *Works*, Vol. II, p. 3.

³ IV, a, p. xxi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

the pure love of truth in general.¹ He saw the force of the objection, yet he insisted that this did not prevent the doctrines from having a significance for a world theory.² He admitted, moreover, that those to whom personality did not appear so fundamental as it did to him would not find much in his philosophy.³ He thus showed that he regarded his standpoint and his view of personality as fundamental to an understanding of his doctrines.

Jacobi's empirical standpoint was new to the rationalism of the age, though it was common to him with many other thinkers, and was being worked out not only by Hamann and Herder, but by Kant in a somewhat different way, and by the writers of the Romantic school. It was, indeed, in the air, and philosophy, which is "the speech of the *Zeitgeist*," was being transformed by it. The old deductive methods were losing their hold upon the times, and the newer empirical methods were taking their places. But it was not till some time afterwards that the new methods successfully and completely occupied the field of philosophy.

That Jacobi adopted the new standpoint is seen by his description of what he regards as the task of philosophy. He thought it the business of philosophy, not to construct or deduce life, but merely to give an account of what life itself constructs out of its experiences.⁴ The older philosophy (dogmatism) had tried to deduce life from some concept which seemed to it fundamental, after the manner of geometry with its concept of space. But the true method is not to have one's acts spring from one's philosophy, but one's philosophy from one's acts and life.⁵ Philosophy cannot precede, but must always follow experience. "Out of the enjoyment [experience] of virtue arises the idea of virtuous being; out of the enjoyment [experience] of freedom, the idea of a free being; out of the enjoyment [experience] of life, the idea of a living being; out of the enjoyment [experience] of the divine, similarly, the idea of a God-like being, and of God."⁶

As a strict empiricist, Jacobi emphasized life as all-important and primary, and as the proper starting-point for philosophy; while theory is but secondary, a mere explanation of the facts of life. What he found in life must be given a place in theory; and not as an illusion,⁷ but as a fact to be reckoned with. Life, especially

¹ IV, a, p. xii.

² *Ibid.*, p. lii.

³ *Ibid.*, p. li.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 234-5.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 241.

⁷ This is a favorite resort of the old and the new *Aufklärung*, and of some of the Evolution or Pure-Experience philosophies of to-day.

spiritual life with its fulness, must all be provided for by doctrine, or else doctrine must recognize its own short-comings. He says: "I would, as well as I can, bring to light what exists in the spirit of man independent of the flesh, and therewith express at least my disdain for the mud philosophy of our day, which to me is an abomination."¹

This general standpoint grew out of the feeling, common to him with others, that there was not much value in the current deductive systems of philosophy.² But, as he carried the revolt to greater extremes than many others, and as he had his own peculiarities of thought, he found he was often greatly misunderstood. He wrote to Hamann: "I do not know if they understand me. If you understand me, then impart suitable counsel to the honest who in these desert places are distressed and look about them for deliverance, only yet held erect and strengthened through devout presentiment."³ And because Jacobi regarded these spiritual experiences as beyond and deeper than the understanding, he himself found it difficult to express what he meant. He continues in his letter to Hamann: "There is light in my heart, but when I would bring it to the understanding it disappears. Which of the two elements is the true one, —that of the understanding, which, indeed, fixes forms, but behind them shows only a bottomless abyss, or that of the heart, which, indeed, throws light promisingly upwards, but fails in determinate knowledge? Can the human mind grasp the truth, except through the union of both in a single light? And is this union thinkable, except through a miracle?"⁴

This shows the two elements in his view which to the last he found it impossible to reconcile. On the one hand, he was deeply impressed with the reality of the experiences of the heart. He was by nature gifted with a deep mysticism, and with a sense of the supersensible and the divine.⁵ On the other hand, he was impressed with the value of science, and of the concepts of the understanding, or, as he says, of the knowledge of the head. The former constituted the positive element in his doctrine; the latter, the negative. "The positive content of Jacobi's philosophy refers, consequently, to love and life; the negative, to the concept and to science; and between the two stands his prejudice of their irreconcilability."⁶

¹ I, p. 365.

² Zeller, *Geschichte der deutschen Philosophie*, p. 437.

³ I, pp. 366-7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 367.

⁵ Kuhn, *Jacobi und die Philosophie seiner Zeit*, p. 134.

⁶ Zirngiebl, *Jacobi's Leben, Dichten und Denken*, p. 44.

The first or positive element grew out of his conception of the value of the individual and of the individual experiences. This he got largely from Pietism, which, like all movements that sprang from the Reformation, placed primary importance on the individual and his spiritual experiences, as is seen in the doctrine of Justification by Faith. This, probably, more than any other influence, led philosophy from the consideration of ontological and cosmological problems to that of psychological. But when Jacobi wrote, that influence had not yet extended throughout the philosophical world, and the current philosophy of the schools was still of the dogmatic, deductive, type.

His acquaintance with the French Sensational School, and with the writings of the English Empiricists, had convinced him that individual experience, or the psychological method, was the only true philosophical method. This, however, he had already learned, in its religious aspects, through his connection with Pietism, though this movement, of course, placed the emphasis on different aspects of experience. With Locke and Hume he believed that all our knowledge comes from experience in its two aspects of Sensation and Reflection; and it was doubtless from this source that he got this part of his doctrine. With these writers, too, he believed that the limits of individual experience are the limits of philosophical inquiry, and that that of which the individual is conscious constitutes the entire material of philosophical investigation. Hume had thus drawn philosophy down from the skies by showing the impossibility of the application of *a priori* principles outside the range of experience.¹ But by his arbitrary limitation of knowledge to phenomena as impressions upon the senses, Hume left reason a mere elaborative faculty, saying that "no kind of reasoning can give rise to a new idea, . . . but wherever we reason, we must antecedently be possest of clear ideas."²

This limitation of knowledge to phenomena is virtually a denial of the possibility of any purely *a priori* knowledge,—*a priori* in the sense of being entirely independent of experience; and also of any knowledge of *a priori* principles of knowledge. This view of knowledge Jacobi accepted, for he too believed that such knowledge is quite impossible. But while denying the ordinary *a priori* knowledge, there is one kind of knowledge to which he would give the name *a priori*, viz., those concepts and principles which are obtained positively and immediately from the actual, *i. e.*, from intui-

¹ III, p. 69.

² *Treatise of Human Nature* (Selby-Bigge edition), p. 164.

tion, from /an experience of the actual.¹ In other words, Jacobi believed that all knowledge issues from experience, but that experience itself contains more than mere phenomena, or sense impressions. Metaphysical principles, he held, are as much given in experience as impressions themselves. This he seems to have learned from his study of Kant, which supplemented his study of Empiricism and Sensationalism. But he regarded Kant's attempt to discover what knowledge could be gained independent of, and even previous to, experience as necessary futile. This, he thought, would mean that a knowledge of the actual could be gained apart from actuality; that the truth could be known apart from the true, a thing which he deemed impossible.²

The epistemology of the Dogmatists had virtually held that truth could be evolved from the mind alone after the manner of geometry. But Jacobi maintained that only in connection with sensibility can the understanding give the true. Sense and understanding must combine in order to produce knowledge. The two are reciprocal elements, and must combine in order that knowledge may arise. "And so one must say, not only of the knowledge which is called *a priori*, but of all knowledge in general, that it cannot be worked up through the sense, but only through the living and active faculty of the soul."³

While opposing the Dogmatists by holding to the necessity of sense perception, he also opposed the Empiricists by viewing mind as an active function. Consciousness is active, and is one with life, which is everywhere an activity. Mind is no dead mirror, for it would then be no consciousness.⁴ Reason is essentially active; it is not a 'torch,' but an 'eye'; for it does not give light,—it sees.⁵ He saw clearly that consciousness must be an active function which judges, and not merely a passive entity which receives material given it from without. He thus moved away from Hume and the older empiricists, from whom, however, he learned much, and for much of whose philosophy he had a good deal of sympathy. Consciousness, to Jacobi, is an active principle which is joined with perceptions, and constitutes reason, which is the essential excellence of our nature.⁶ In this way, "the purest and richest impression has the purest and richest reason for its result."⁷ And this reason is

¹ II, pp. 267-8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 263.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

⁴ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

⁵ II, p. 266.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

but the indwelling in us of spirit,¹ which Jacobi always conceived as active. The unity which there is in experience is not that of a mere stream or aggregate of experiences, but is due to its being the experience of a real central principle of unity—the soul. As in the universe as a whole, so in the experiences of man, the only unifying principle is spirit.² The human soul is a real principle of unity, for its nature consists especially in this, that it is able to distinguish itself from other things.³

Jacobi thus gives evidence of a very clear conception of what constitutes self-consciousness,—a conception upon which his whole philosophy is based. It would be too much to say, however, that his view is completely adequate, or fully worked out. But he saw clearly the uniqueness of knowledge and of conscious activity, and its essential difference from all the mechanical or biological processes of nature. Any fact of knowledge, or other mental process, does not constitute an object in a world of objects. It has none of the ear-marks of a ‘thing.’ It is of a totally different order, and is in no way a ‘particular,’ after the manner of the objects of the external world. It is, on the contrary, in every case a ‘universal,’ and so can never be a determination of a ‘thing.’ It is a determination of spirit, which alone constitutes a substratum for the universal.

In accordance with this, Jacobi affirmed strenuously that thought is not a mechanical determination, but an activity of spirit, obeying a higher law, which, for want of a better word, is commonly called ‘freedom.’ That is to say, the laws and conceptions which apply to the external world of objects will not apply to the internal world of thought. In so far as man is one among a world of objects, that is, as body, he is governed by the same laws of mechanism and natural necessity which govern all other objects. Freedom and natural necessity are, therefore, joined in man, though *how* it is impossible for one to explain.⁴ It will not do to deny the fact, however, for want of an adequate explanation. That there are two such distinct realms, the one of freedom, the other of necessity, is obvious to all. To deny freedom would be to deny spirit and to reduce all to a mechanism which has an accompanying consciousness.⁵ For if man is not free, then all the products of man are produced necessarily, and intelligence is a mere onlooker.

¹ III, p. 422.

² II, p. 274.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 318.

We must take freedom as the highest and first, as the absolute beginning, or else we are obliged with Spinoza and his predecessors and successors to accept fatalism, and to reduce ethics to physics.¹ Consciousness, however, will not submit to such a reduction; and, moreover, a universal and infinite nature-mechanism would have no meaning. Just as the knowledge of nature cannot be itself a part of nature, so, in order for nature to have any meaning, there must be persons who are not parts of the nature-mechanism, who are not included in the chain of mechanical necessity. There must be some principle which is outside the process, in order that the process may have any meaning. The assumption that there is an actual and true freedom, then, becomes necessary, though it remains for later investigation to fix the exact limits of freedom and necessity.

Freedom, in Jacobi's conception, means that man's spirit is not subject to the mechanism of nature, but in some manner rises above it, and makes it to be its servant.² This consists in the exercise of the will; for "the independency and inner power of the will, or the possible sovereignty of the intellectual essence over the sensible essence is *de facto* conceded by all men."³ This means that the will is moved by spiritual and not by mere mechanical determination. To consider the spirit as mechanically moved (as with Hartley, Condillac, or Bonnet) would necessitate a mechanics of the soul as all-embracing as Newton's view of the heavens. Moreover, without the conception of freedom, no one would ever know the limits of the determined, or that there are limits; and without the consciousness of a world higher than sense, no one would know what determination means.⁴

Positively, freedom is self-activity, though not an absolute self-activity, but an activity that is moved by ideals which are of divine origin.⁵ It "does not consist in an absurd power of deciding without reasons, nor even in the choice of what is better among useful things, or of rational desire. . . . But it consists in this essentially,—the independence, on the part of the will, of the desires."⁶ In other words, the will is moved, not by desires which are entirely physical, but by ideals which are spiritual; for the choosing and judging spirit can disregard all the promptings of the flesh. That this is an adequate view of desire need hardly be urged; for it is evident that

¹ II, p. 47.

² *Ibid.*, p. 316; III, p. 401.

³ IV, a, p. 28.

⁴ II, pp. 80-1.

⁵ IV, a, p. xxvii; II, pp. 46, 315-6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the desires of a human being must contain both rational and physical elements; and that the will is not independent of, but has a very close relation to desire.

At this point we see one of Jacobi's peculiar views, which shows his conception of the limitation of the scientific method. He held that supersensible things cannot be treated scientifically. At Geneva he had learned the methods of exact science, and had seen the vain endeavor of the sensationalists to apply these methods to psychic phenomena. In their efforts to make a science of the things of the spirit, commonly so-called, these materialists had taken away all the content of life, and had thus left a deep chasm between science and life. But Jacobi maintained that the soul, which is a free spirit, cannot thus be treated scientifically.¹ He did not deny the appropriateness of these methods to physical phenomena, but held that another method, namely, faith, intuition, and not demonstration, must be adopted when we come to deal with supersensible facts. In this way he could accept the science of the *Aufklärung*, and of the Sensationalists, while he likewise accepted the philosophy of faith or of feeling. This gave him a double world-view, one the scientific, from the standpoint of which he was a skeptic; the other the philosophical, from the standpoint of which he was a strict theist. These different positions he maintained at one and the same time, and never saw their reconciliation, but stood Janus-faced between the two.² He never could reconcile his philosophical view of life with his scientific view of the world, though he somewhat dogmatically maintained the supremacy of the former.³ "Life and science are for Jacobi heterogeneous things. In the one he denies what in the other he posits; all life is to him an immediacy, all thought a mediation. Life exists of itself, but human knowledge is through and through dependent."⁴ In other words, life is a process of immediacy, and this fact philosophy must take as its starting-point; while science or definite knowledge depends upon demonstration, and issues only in abstract concepts.

Instead of seeking a reconciliation of science and life by a careful examination of the method of science, he accepted the scientific method as valid when applied to the facts of nature, and, accordingly, accepted the resulting view of nature. But he could not accept its results in the sphere of the supersensible; though he had no objection to urge against the method as such, but only against

¹ II, p. 314.

² Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³ Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁴ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

its unsatisfactory results. His reverent regard for facts, especially the facts of the spiritual life, prevented him from being forced to accept the conclusions of the sensationalists and the materialists. He endeavored, however, to discover a new method for the study of supersensible facts, the method of immediacy. This was not original with him, as he held it in common with Hamann, Herder, and others, though he did more than any other to show its true meaning, and to bring it into philosophy. He accordingly came to reserve the term 'science' for those studies to which he considered the exact mathematical method of the sensationalists and dogmatists applicable, namely, the study of nature and all its forms; while he reserved the term 'philosophy' for the study of spiritual things, where he considered the method of immediacy, of intuition, of faith, was alone applicable.

This unfortunate schism in his view of the world shows itself in two ways. On the one hand, it left him with the crude materialistic view of nature, as an absolutely spiritless, purely mechanical system. It was in every way the opposite of spirit.¹ Nature was the region of necessary and regular laws, *i. e.*, of determination; and the methodology of science was therefore mathematics. The great achievements of Newton and other mathematicians had made scientists think that mathematics was the key to all knowledge. It was, therefore, not the fault of Jacobi, but one of the limitations of his age, that he could not conceive of any other scientific method. The biological sciences, which do not use mathematics, had not sufficiently developed, and it was only with their development that it was seen that the mathematical was not the only scientific method. It is to the credit of Jacobi, then, that he could work himself free from the methods in which he had been trained; and it is interesting to find him agreeing with F. Schlegel, that it was to be lamented that since Bacon there had been many attempts to degrade philosophy to a science, after the manner of mathematics and physics.²

On the other hand, his schism between life and science left Jacobi with the view that the facts of life would not submit to any kind of scientific treatment at all,—that no knowledge of the supersensible could be gained by any process of reflection, but only in an immediacy of experience which he called faith or feeling, but came later to call reason. He accordingly opposed the entire philosophy of reflection, which he conceived to subordinate the immediate to mediate knowledge. He regretted that there had been, ever since Aristotle, an attempt to subordinate the immediate to the mediate,

¹ Drews, *Die deutsche Spekulation seit Kant*, Bd. II, p. 7.

² III, p. xxxii.

perception to reflection, the original to the copy, the essence to the word, the reason to the understanding; to hold nothing for true which cannot be proved, and to regard intuition as of less value than the concept.¹ He thought this kind of philosophy regarded nothing as true which could not be twice shown, once in perception where it was given directly, and once in conception where it was to be demonstrated.

To refute, then, what he called the 'philosophy of reflection' was one side of Jacobi's aim and endeavor. This negative aspect has been thought by many to be his chief service to philosophy. Kuno Fischer says Jacobi's greatest strength comes out in the negative, and that his standpoint appears best in opposition and denial; the more a view was opposite to his own the more marked was his sharpness and shrewdness.² Jacobi's negative position with reference to the previous philosophy is considered his merit by Pünjer also, who says that opinion will probably long differ as to the value of his positive effort to found a special philosophy of Belief or Feeling.³ This is in the main true, for Jacobi did much to show the insufficiency of the analytical method which had so long prevailed in philosophy, and which he calls the 'philosophy of reflection'; though he did not see very clearly the meaning of the synthetic method, which was the method he was endeavoring to formulate. But it is only fair to him to state that he at least showed what a true synthetic method must be, though he never could succeed in setting it forth satisfactorily, even to himself.

Philosophy, as he conceived it, had proceeded by demonstration in the sphere of the understanding, and as such could not touch at all the facts of reason (or faith).⁴ With Descartes this false method had entered philosophy, and ever since his time practically all philosophy had gone on the same line, holding nothing for true which could not be proved, or demonstrated by the understanding. This proceeded on the assumption that all knowledge is mediated by ideas,⁵ and ignored the concrete experiences of a conscious human being.⁶ It made ideas depend only upon ideas, and so on *ad infinitum*. But Jacobi's contention was that ideas come from experiences, directly and immediately.⁷ In other words, his objection was that the earlier philosophy had been entirely deductive, with

¹ II, p. 11.

² *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Bd. V, p. 218.

³ Pünjer, *Op. cit.*, p. 623.

⁴ IV, a, p. xxx.

⁵ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 23 ff.

⁶ IV, a, pp. 30 ff.

⁷ *Ibid.*

no empirical element, whereas a true philosophy must be in constant touch with experience. Deduction would, moreover, involve an endless series without ever getting a fundamental principle, or actual experience, and would therefore yield only an unconditioned which is free from material,—empty, and completely indeterminate.¹ This very discerning criticism seems to be an anticipation on the part of Jacobi of Hegel's view of thought as giving a concrete, and not an abstract universal.

Jacobi accepted the current division of the thinking faculty into understanding and reason, but differed from the current view as to what were their respective spheres. To him, the understanding was a faculty of mediation, a mere faculty of concepts, judgments, and conclusions, which can reveal absolutely nothing out of itself.² It simply gets concepts of concepts from concepts, and so gradually attains to ideas, though it does not touch reality.³ It is a faculty of reflection on sense intuitions, a faculty which separates and reunites concepts, judgments, and conclusions,⁴ and is thus a faculty of abstractions.⁵ With Kant, Jacobi regarded the understanding as in no way dealing with reality directly, but depending upon sensibility which furnishes the material of thought. But he differed from Kant in holding that reason too (or faith) furnishes an intuition of the true and the real. Jacobi thought that, while sensibility furnishes the material of our knowledge of sensible objects, the reason (or faith) furnishes just as directly our knowledge of supersensible objects. Kant's *intellectuelle Anschauung* bears some relation to Jacobi's doctrine on this point, though it differs greatly in that Kant conceives this rather as an ideal of knowledge, in which the intellectual element is freed from and does not depend upon the sensible, and as such is possible only in the divine consciousness, and can at best be merely approximated by the human consciousness. Jacobi, on the other hand, conceived his 'rational intuition' as the faculty of supersensible knowledge, or of the knowledge of supersensible objects. Reason was to him quite as much a faculty of intuition as was sense. Indeed, this is the main contention of his entire philosophy.

It is important to notice, at this point, the change which Jacobi made in his use of the terms 'understanding' and 'reason.' The ordinary use of these words was that "*Verstand* (understanding) is the more practical intellect which seeks definite and restricted re-

¹ Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 633.

² II, pp. 10-11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78, and III, pp. 23 and 93.

sults and knowledges; while *Vernunft* (reason) is a deeper and higher power which aims at completeness."¹ Understanding, then, was the general faculty of cognition, while reason was a higher power which sees the connections of things. As against both of these forms of knowledge, Jacobi, in his earlier writings, insisted on the superior authority of feeling or faith. In his later writings, however, he broadened his use of the term 'reason' to include what Kant had meant by both reason and faith, especially reason in its practical use. Thus "what he had first called *Glaube* he latterly called *Vernunft*,—which is in brief a 'sense for the supersensible,'—an intuition giving higher and complete or total knowledge—an immediate apprehension of the real and the true. As contrasted with this reasonable faith or feeling, he regards *Verstand* as a mere faculty of inference or derivative knowledge, referring one thing to another by the rule of identity."²

Jacobi is thus seen to make a distinction between understanding and reason (faith) which makes the two irreconcilable. Understanding deals with matters which come under what we call science. It deals with concepts and ideas which are derived from objects of sense perception. As such, it is always mediate, and can never reach objects (or the true) directly, but can deal with truth only at second hand, or by demonstration. Reason (faith), on the other hand, which is the organ of philosophy, reaches out to objects, to reality, to the true, in a manner similar to sensibility itself, only that it reaches a different kind of objects, viz., supersensible objects.

The understanding, therefore, will not be able to assert the existence of any real things, but will often be led to deny them altogether, especially the supersensible objects of reason. Kant had shown that the understanding, in attempting to deal with unconditioned objects, falls into antinomies, and Jacobi maintained that it is even led to deny the existence of these objects altogether, simply because it has no means of reaching them. They belong to a totally different sphere of intellectual activity. But what the understanding denies the reason affirms, and neither one can disprove the other, though each is supreme in its own sphere.

Jacobi thus held to a form of the twofold truth,—Science on the one hand, and Faith (Reason) on the other. He is here seen to be anti-rationalistic, for he makes a complete opposition between feeling (reason) and thought (understanding),³ and gives the

¹ Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 400.

² *Ibid.*, p. 401. Cf. also Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 156 ff, and Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 622.

³ Windelband, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Bd., II, pp. 338–339.

superiority to the former. It is to be noted, however, that the extreme form of the opposition was no necessary part of Jacobi's doctrine, but came about as a result of the onesidedness of the *Aufklärung*, and from the rationalism which was the "driving-wheel of the *Aufklärung*.¹" It may be well to recall that this counter tendency to rationalism had been in the air for some time, and that it took shape not only in the *Gefühlphilosophie*, but also in the Romantic movement, as well as in every form of activity. So that "the opposition between science and faith posited by Jacobi is closely connected with the great movement on behalf of feeling which, since Rousseau, had governed the age. . . . He fought for the rights of immediacy, of reality, and of individuality, and in so doing contributed important corrections to the direction which philosophy was on the point of taking, and along which he himself would fain have enticed her."²

But in stating the matter in this way, Jacobi created that contradiction from which he delivered himself only by his *salto mortale*. Finding himself shut up within the region of the conditioned, of the understanding, the only way he could see to get out was by a leap for life into the region of faith beyond. Once there, he was equally unable to return. That is to say, the conditioned and the unconditioned were two distinct and separate spheres, which had nothing to do with each other. He could not conceive the unconditioned as being the principle of knowledge and will in the conditioned, but the two were hopelessly and forever outside each other. Consequently, his "faith and his knowledge constituted two distinct philosophies; hence it was no wonder that he complained that his head and his heart were at variance."³ This constitutes one of the fundamental weaknesses of his system, and leaves him not with one philosophy, but with two. And so contradictory are the two that they can be held together only by force.

We may see, accordingly, his view of what constitutes the sphere and the problem of philosophy. He did not understand philosophy to be a science in the usual meaning of that word, which is mediate knowledge through conceptions. On the contrary, philosophy is an immediate knowledge of the supersensible.⁴ Science deals only with the sensible and the conditioned, and its instrument is the understanding. Accordingly, if we are to have any knowledge of the supersensible at all, there must be a faculty which is higher than

¹ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

² Höffding, *History of Modern Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 120.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

⁴ Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

understanding.¹ This faculty is reason or faith, and it operates in a positive or mystical way.² And just as sense intuition does not depend upon demonstration, but refers directly to objects themselves, so this higher faculty of reason or faith reveals the objects of reason immediately.³ (It might very well be called rational intuition.) The sphere of this faculty is the sphere of philosophy, which is therefore seen to consist in the setting forth of the objects of reason or faith, as these are revealed immediately to knowledge. Man, then, and his experiences of the supersensible, rather than his experiences of nature, constitute the sphere and problem of 'philosophy.' Philosophy cannot begin with nature, for then it could never get into the unconditioned at all. It must begin immediately with the unconditioned, what Jacobi called the original revelation to the soul, which is more than all nature put together.⁴ And the function of philosophy is therefore "to exhibit in the most conscientious way humanity as it is, be it explicable or inexplicable."⁵ This involves two things: First, philosophy deals with man, not nature. Nature is the field of science; and Jacobi had but little regard for a science of nature as such. For, to him, nature seemed to conceal God, as it revealed only a chain of efficient causes, or a mechanism, in which there was no place for things peculiarly divine, such as virtue and immortality. Secondly, the function of philosophy is to *reveal* existence, not to demonstrate it. "The greatest merit of enquiry is to unveil and to reveal existence. Definition is its means—the way to its goal—its proximate, not its ultimate end. Its ultimate end is that which cannot be defined, the insoluble, the immediate, the simple."⁶

The proper notions of philosophy are, therefore, no *mere* ideas, which rest upon mediation, but immediate convictions, subjectively and objectively certain truths.⁷ Jacobi considered that concepts could not help where there was neither outer nor inner object intuitable through impression or feeling. Every demonstration which does not proceed on this assumption, every explanation which does not give an intuitable object, is, like mathematical points and lines, only a cobweb of the brain.⁸ Not nature, then, but the invisible, the mysterious, the divine, was what he regarded as the field of philosophy.⁹ And these objects, he held, are the objects of philosophy only

¹ II, p. 22.

² *Ibid.*, p. 23.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁴ IV, a, p. xli.

⁵ Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 623.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 61. Cf. also p. 25.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 124.

in so far as they are able to present themselves in intuition; for what is actual can be intuited.¹ Jacobi's interest in philosophy was therefore with those objects of our thought and higher life which are comprehended under the terms God, Freedom, and Immortality.² These and the relations in which they subsist, and in which they become known to men, are the objects of philosophical inquiry. These alone are matters of universal human interest; all other objects are of merely special and temporary interest.

After carefully examining the standpoints of the various types of philosophy, Jacobi remained unsatisfied. He had no ambition to construct a system, and was driven to an independent formulation of his views only by the necessity of finding a resting-place for his thought; and, more particularly, by his desire to establish theism and religion, which contained for him the whole significance of life. But this was not until he had failed to find contentment either in Sensationalism, in Dogmatism, or in Criticism. His reading of Spinoza, Leibniz, and Wolff had convinced him that in this type of philosophy his purpose of finding a place for the supersensible, or for spiritual objects, for religion and freedom, could not be realized. Nor did he have any better hopes for the Critical Philosophy, which ended in the complete idealism of Fichte. And his reading of Hume and the Geneva school showed him plainly that no place could be found for these in Empiricism.

While these various schools were deductive or inductive as the case might be, their common characteristic was their analytical method,—they started with conceptions which were obtained either *a priori* or *a posteriori*, and their movement was constantly within the circle in which they began. They never got beyond. Kant alone had a synthetic method, but as Jacobi did not thoroughly understand Kant's meaning, he missed the very thing for which he was looking. What he wanted was some method by which he might get out of the eternal hobby-horse movement that kept forever in the place where it began. Descartes had started the method of demonstration from purely *a priori* conceptions, and it had ended in the Dialectic of Kant. Locke had begun purely epistemological studies, starting from subjective sensations, and this movement had ended in the Scepticism of Hume. And it was Jacobi's contention that Kant had not completely answered Hume, but was himself equally subjective, and had found no certainty except in the ideas of the individual consciousness. The whole question, then, of the

¹ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

² III, p. 68.

objective validity of our sensations and of our ideas still stood awaiting an answer.

Dogmatism, Empiricism, and Criticism had all raised, but had not settled, the question as to the objective validity of our perceptions, and especially of our internal perceptions. The question, then, which confronted Jacobi was that of the objective validity of our perceptions and our experiences. The Scottish School had the same problem, and answered it in a somewhat similar way. The affiliations of Jacobi and Reid have often been noted. Jacobi, however, while attempting to answer the question in both its aspects, with reference to both subjective and objective perceptions, was nevertheless more interested in the former. His answer consisted in maintaining that we know objects immediately, without the need of any demonstration. He differed, however, in a marked manner from the Scottish School. Reid had held that our knowledge is in the first instance of ideas, but had held that our ideas are ideas of objects. Jacobi, on the other hand, maintained that our knowledge is immediately of objects, and that our ideas are at once our perceptions. He would not admit that our knowledge was of ideas, but that it was of objects. Hence, he thought, objects were immediately given in the very first act of knowledge. His views on this subject constitute his doctrine of immediacy. In regard to sense perceptions, his doctrine was a form of Realism gradually developing toward Idealism; while his answer with regard to our internal perceptions, or of supersensible objects, constitutes his view of Theism and Religion.

CHAPTER III.

THE DOCTRINE OF IMMEDIACY.

Jacobi's main problem, then, was to discover the method and the manner by which we obtain knowledge of objective existence; for he never doubted that there is objective existence, and that we have a knowledge of it. Kant, starting from the same certainty of knowledge, tried to find out what must be the conditions in the subject which make a knowledge of the object possible. Jacobi, on the other hand, was not interested in analyzing the metaphysical conditions of knowledge, as these are to be found in either the subject or the object, but in the purely epistemological problem of how the subject is related to the object in the concrete process of knowledge. As we have already seen, he had discarded demonstration, or mediation by ideas, as the method of reaching the truth, because, at best, this is a method at second hand. Ideas are to him abstract universals, and as such do not put one in contact with the true reality. They give only the truth, which is but a reflection of the true, and is not the true itself. The true is the only concrete. He says: "Consciousness and life are one."¹ And this seems to mean that both life and knowledge (consciousness) have to do at once with the concrete. All knowledge is a knowledge of reality, of actuality.

In other words, Jacobi was a pure empiricist in the matter of knowledge. He was, indeed, a much stricter empiricist than Locke or Hume, for while they both held that knowledge is only of ideas, Jacobi said that knowledge is directly of objects. As Royce remarks, the mystic is the only complete empiricist. Jacobi, moreover, extended the bounds of direct empirical knowledge much further than Locke or Hume had ever thought of doing. These thinkers had limited it to the data of sensation and reflection; and Hume had gone so far as to make every idea depend upon an impression on the senses, while Locke had made Reflection of little avail by limiting it to the ideas "the mind gets by reflecting on its own operations within itself."² Jacobi had no disposition to question this general standpoint, but he merely extended the field of direct observation so as to include in 'Reflection' the objects of internal as well as external intuition. By this he meant not the operations of the

¹ *Werke*, II, p. 263.

² Locke, *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Bk. II, ch. i, § 4.

mind, but spiritual objects which are in no way objects of sense, such as the existence and personality of God, Freedom, and Immortality.

This, then, is to deny that sense is the only way in which we can relate ourselves directly to reality. There is yet another way, says Jacobi, but it is at the same time another sort of reality that is reached. The first way, the way of sense, relates us only to material objects. The other way, the way of faith, relates us to supersensible and immaterial objects. To this view Jacobi was led after reading Hume, and was subsequently confirmed in it by reading Kant. And it was his reading of Kant that caused the change in his terminology. At first he used the words 'feeling' and 'faith'; the one signifying the faculty used, the other the assurance we had of the actuality of the object, though he at times confused the two. But later he came to use the word 'reason' for both the faculty and the assurance. It is, however, to be noted that Jacobi, though borrowing the terms of other writers, did not always employ them in the original sense. None of the philosophers mentioned above thought of any way in which supersensible objects could be directly known. Knowledge of such objects was to them at best only immediate. Locke said that we know God by demonstration; Hume disavowed such knowledge altogether; while Kant got it only by the round-about way of the practical reason. But in spite of this scepticism, Jacobi was never led to doubt the reality of such objects, or the possibility of our knowing them immediately. He was led only to doubt all preceding methods of knowledge, and was thrown back upon himself to find some new method which should be adequate to the task.

Empiricism had taught him to think that perception was the only method of knowledge which gave the true, and thereby the truth. He accordingly said that there must then be a perception of the supersensible, after the manner of the perception of the sensible, which alone the empiricists recognized. In taking the position that all knowledge is positive, and rests upon perception,¹ Jacobi thought he was merely following out consistently and to its proper limit the fundamental position upon which practically all philosophy is built. Even Descartes and Spinoza, though rationalists and demonstrative philosophers, started with immediate intuitions. The 'I think' of Descartes was an immediate intuition, and from this he made his departure, though he henceforth proceeded by mediation.² Simi-

¹ Cf. Kuhn, *Jacobi u. d. Philos. s. Zeit*, p. 160.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 68-72.

larly, Spinoza started with an intuition,—the identity of thought and extension in God as substance,—and from this he developed his system mediately. This intuition, then, which forms the basis of the presupposition of the identity of knowledge and being, was necessary for Spinoza in order that he might get under way. Thus, from the intuition 'I think,' Descartes developed the I, the not-I, and God; and from the intuition of God, Spinoza developed the fulness of the world of being and of knowledge.¹

This, then, is the method which Jacobi adopted, and which he endeavored to carry through to the end without abandoning it for mediation as soon as he got under way, as the others had done. This he called his method of faith or of immediate intuition; and in the form in which we have outlined it, it is the only form which Jacobi recognized in his earlier writings,—the period of *Allwill* and *Woldemar*. Some of the German writers on Jacobi seem to regard this as the only true philosophical method.² But this would be to abandon philosophy as a thought-problem and to mistake a practical for a theoretical solution. It is in this same spirit that Hegel says that philosophy begins where Jacobi ends, for philosophy is an endeavor to resolve the contradictions of life. Jacobi, he says, simply proves the presence of contradictions, and stops there.³ If this were all he did, then Jacobi would not be a philosopher at all. It is true that in his early writings Jacobi was merely the mystic, the dreamer, and that he did not try to formulate his views in any systematic way, but was satisfied to express them in the romantic forms of correspondence and fiction. In his later years, however, he was led to more definite formulations of his doctrines, and came also to see that his principle of immediacy was no less a principle of thought than of feeling, as is evidenced by the fact that he changed his terminology, and that he called his principle 'reason' rather than 'feeling.' We do not regard this change in names as indicating any change in principle, but only as evidence that he came to realize more clearly that thought no less than feeling was a factor in immediacy. Perhaps the best and most complete presentation of his doctrine is to be found in his latest writings,—the general Introduction to his collected works, which is prefixed to the second volume. It will be our task now to follow him in more detail in his exposition of his doctrine, as this can be gathered from his complete works.

Jacobi's general attitude was that of the Faith Philosophy. This

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 76, 78.

² E. g., Kuhn and Zirngiebl.

³ Cf. Lévy-Bruhl, *La philosophie de Jacobi*, pp. 247-8. For Hegel's criticism of Jacobi cf. Hegel, *Werke*, Bd. I, pp. 50-112; Bd. V, pp. 126 ff.; Bd. XV, pp. 486 ff.

was a general opposition to a demonstrative system, as we have already seen. It directed itself at times chiefly against Kant, regarding him as the type of the philosophy of reflection. Thus Höffding speaks of "a very significant opposition offered by a group of men who all, under different forms, maintained the significance of immediate feeling, and of historical tradition; speaking broadly, we may say they defended the undivided, concentrated activity of the spirit in opposition to Kant's analysis and criticism which led him, at so many points, to make sharp distinctions between elements which, as a matter of fact, are only given in indissoluble union. These men, for the most part, do Kant injustice; for they overlook the attempts which he himself made to reunite that which he had only put asunder for the sake of clearness, and the furtherance of investigation."¹ This opposition to Kant grew out of their opposition to the philosophy of the *Aufklärung*, to which they thought he still belonged. They had come to distrust mere reason, and conceived logical thought to be abstract, and therefore divorced from the true, in immediate apprehension of which alone they thought knowledge could be gained. Hamann thought knowledge the most abstract form of our existence, and that only by means of feeling "do abstractions get hands, feet, or wings."² This extravagant view Jacobi adopted, and conceived that thought is not the true way of life, but that the way of life is mysterious (mystical), and not syllogistic, and not mechanical.³

Knowledge, then, does not depend primarily upon a reasoning process, according to Jacobi, but upon an immediate intuition. Concerning Allwill, through whom Jacobi speaks his own views, he says: "What he had investigated, he so sought to impress on himself, that it should remain with him. All his mighty convictions rest upon immediate intuition."⁴ To him, therefore, "the validity of the sensible evidence is superior to every rational conclusion."⁵ Everything depends on perception or intuition. This is excellent above all processes of inference; for the latter cannot discover that anything is, but themselves presuppose a consciousness of the true upon which they rest. Understanding depends upon and is only the hand-maid of intuition, from which it receives all the material which it elaborates. Accordingly, "the purest and richest impression has as a result the purest and richest reason."⁶ All the material

¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 110.

² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³ IV, a, p. 249.

⁴ I, p. xiii.

⁵ Zirngiebl, *Jacobi's Leben, Dichten und Denken*, p. 71.

⁶ II, p. 270.

of knowledge comes through intuition (sense or reason), and is presented to the understanding. We cannot absolutely create anything by means of the understanding alone. Jacobi, therefore, thought Kant's search for purely *a priori* knowledge wholly futile. He did not see that Kant was not trying to discover knowledge which should be independent of all experience, but knowledge of *a priori* principles which entered into, and therefore were constitutive of, all experience.

In opposition to the Sensationalists who held that all knowledge comes from sensation, and to Kant who held that pure *a priori* knowledge is possible, Jacobi maintained that the receptive part of mind is two-fold. First, there is sensibility, or the faculty of sense impression, which reveals objects of the external world immediately to the mind. Secondly, there is spiritual feeling or faith,¹ which he came later to call 'reason.' This was his own peculiar philosophical position, and marks him off from others more than any other of his doctrines. He here used the word 'reason' in a new and peculiar sense. Heretofore 'reason,' when different from the understanding, had been used to denote a higher faculty of thought, a faculty which did more than elaborate the data of sense-impression. There is, however, some historical warrant for Jacobi's use of the term, in that reason as thus used had denoted the faculty of the unconditioned. Kant had used it in this way, and had dealt with the problems of the Soul, Freedom, and God, calling them Ideas of Reason.

His use of the words 'faith,' 'belief,' with reference to the same faculty and the assurance of its truthfulness, is likewise not altogether unlike previous uses of these words. Kant had used 'faith' to denote that belief in the Ideas of Reason which persists beyond all the scepticism of the Dialectic. But Hume is the one who furnished to Jacobi the chief warrant for this use of the term. He uses 'belief' to denote the assurance we have of the reality of objects, which are present to the senses, and thereby to distinguish knowledge from imagination. Faith or Belief is the name of that feeling of certainty which is attached to our knowledge of actual objects, and which distinguishes knowledge from imagination, which has to do only with fictions.² Belief, or Faith, then is the conviction we have of the actuality of the objects of perception,—a conviction which does not rest on proof.³ And when this has reference to

¹ II, p. 60.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 147, 148, 153, 156 ff.; and Hume, *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Section V, Part ii.

³ IV, a, p. 210.

supersensible objects, it is an immediate reflection of the divine knowledge and will in the finite spirit of man.¹ Certainty pertains as much to reason and its objects, as to sense and its objects. Certainty and reason go together.² From this direct assurance in intuition all certainty arises. "How can we strive for certainty unless we are already in possession of some certainty? And how can it be known to us except by that which we already know with certainty? This leads us to the idea of an immediate certainty, which needs no proof, but absolutely excludes all proof, being itself above the idea (*Vorstellung*) corresponding to the represented object, and hence having its reason in itself. The conviction from proof is a conviction at second hand; it rests on comparison, and can never be quite sure and complete."³

There are, then, two faculties of perception, Sense and Reason (or Faith). These two faculties are, for Jacobi, very much alike in form. First, they are alike in view of the nature of their revelations. Both reveal their objects immediately to knowledge, without the mediation of any process of proof. Secondly, they are alike in that they both bring to consciousness actual substantial objects. Thirdly, they are alike in view of the immediate certainty whereby they reflect their objects in consciousness.⁴ They differ only in the objects which each reveals. Sense, on the one hand, reveals the sensible real, the real of the external world of sense objects. Reason, on the other hand, reveals the supersensible real, the real of the supersensible or spiritual objects.⁵ The process of the first is an impression, and that of the second is a kind of feeling. The conceptions of the first are called objects; those of the second are called Ideas,⁶ or, as Kant calls them, Ideas of Reason. To both of these is attached a certain feeling of actuality that enables one to distinguish the true from the false, truth from fiction. This feeling is Belief. But Jacobi was somewhat careless in his use of terms, and seems at times to call this assurance 'faith' as well as 'feeling.' Consequently, 'faith' represents not only the faculty of supersensuous knowledge, but also at times the assurance of the actuality of the objects of that knowledge. This is due to the double use of the word *Glaube*.

It is thus easily seen, that, to Jacobi, the 'power of faith' is a

¹ II, pp. 55-56.

² III, pp. 314-315.

³ IV, a, p. 210.

⁴ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 271-2.

⁵ II, p. 62.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2. Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

faculty above reason,¹ either in the earlier sense of reason as equivalent to understanding, or in the later as a power of perception of supersensible objects. For while it is reason that perceives, it is faith which gives certainty. Reason, as a perceptive faculty, presupposes the actual existence of the true;² and reveals to us the true, the good, and the beautiful.³ The original light of reason, however, is faith,⁴ *i. e.*, it is faith which gives the assurance that what the reason reveals is actuality and not fiction.

Jacobi's plea, accordingly, was for the recognition of a faculty to which the supersensible shall be true, and not a mere fiction,—a faculty which shall recognize the true in and above phenomena, and which is different from sense and understanding.⁵ This faculty, then, is reason, and it is an eye for spiritual things; and he calls it the “soul-eye,” as sense is the “appearance-eye.”⁶ He appeals to Socrates and Plato as authority for thus speaking of a higher reason,—a faculty which apprehends the spiritual.⁷ But above this, again, is Faith, Belief, which is the assurance of the actuality of these objects.

Reason, then, becomes the faculty of direct and immediate knowledge, as Understanding is the faculty of indirect and mediate knowledge.⁸ Knowledge of the former sort is in no way dependent upon proof, but is independent and above proof.⁹ Here only are Providence and Freedom truly known.¹⁰ These man does not ordinarily dispute, for he naturally believes both his sense and his reason, since upon this acceptance depends all knowledge.¹¹ We are all born into faith just as we are born into society.¹² And all actuality, the corporeal which the senses reveal, as well as the spiritual which the reason reveals, is to man certified through Faith (Belief) alone. There is no certainty outside and above this.¹³

Reason, therefore, is not founded upon any power of demonstration (understanding); but demonstration is founded upon reason.

¹ II, p. 14.

² III, p. 32.

³ II, p. 72.

⁴ IV, a, p. xlii.

⁵ II, p. 73.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹² IV, a, p. 210.

¹³ II, pp. 108–9.

With this begins knowledge and science, *i. e.*, they begin with the material furnished by sense and reason as faculties of perception.¹ But Jacobi did not develop this further knowledge as we might wish; he seemed satisfied to leave it less organized than the spirit of his system would permit. His indisposition to systematize what he conceived to be the revelations of reason is no doubt due to his vein of mysticism, which was a relic of his early Pietistic training. He seemed afraid to analyze carefully, lest he should lose the actual in the thought, the true in the truth. This defect was the result of his inherent distrust of the understanding, which he conceived could not deal faithfully with the supersensible, but would turn it into falsehood. The understanding was to him a faculty of the conditioned; while the Ideas of Reason were unconditioned, and were therefore outside the sphere of the understanding.

This immediacy of reason Jacobi took to be the starting-point of philosophy, and in this he differed greatly from Hegel, who regarded such an immediacy as the result of thought, *i. e.*, as thought's highest attainment rather than its beginning. To Jacobi, however, reason (*Vernunft*) constitutes the data of all thought (*Verstand*), and without this we get only empty form without content.² "All human knowledge proceeds from revelation and faith."³ "The element of all human knowledge and activity is faith."⁴ This knowledge is possible to man because he is spirit, and to him, therefore, the Giver of that spirit can be present,—more present to his heart than nature is to his outward senses. The true, the beautiful, and the good are more to his inner sense than sensible objects are to his outer sense.⁵ Jacobi accordingly conceived that we believe in God "because we see Him," though he is not visible to the bodily eye. Yet He is an appearance to every high and noble man. And, moreover, "'nothing is more like God,' says Socrates through Plato, 'than that one among us who is most righteous.'"⁶

The truth of intuition, then, is in the fact that the objects themselves are revealed directly to us. It is the intuition of reason which affords us a knowledge of supersensible objects, that is, affords us assurance of their reality and truth. Jacobi called his philosophy the philosophy of pure objective feeling, because it recognizes the authority of this feeling as the highest, and builds upon this

¹ II, p. 111.

² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³ III, p. xxxiii.

⁴ IV, a, p. 223.

⁵ II, pp. 114-120.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

authority.¹ "All actuality, the corporeal which reveals itself to the senses, as well as the spiritual which reveals itself to the reason, is authenticated in man only through feeling; there is no authority outside of or above this."²

It is in this faculty of supersensuous feeling (which Jacobi later called reason) that man finds his peculiar character. It is this alone which makes him superior to animals. "The impression, however, which grounds knowledge in the sensuous intuition (called the proper knowledge) is as little superior to feeling [reason], which grounds knowledge in faith, as the order of animals is superior to the order of men, the material world to the intellectual, or nature to its author."³ This "rational intuition"⁴ is man's peculiar power, and "it is solely and alone by the *proprium* of reason that man is elevated above mere animal being." Jacobi thus showed that he saw clearly the distinction between man and animal, between knowledge and instinct, between the process of thought and the process of nature. We may not think he gave a completely satisfactory account of the distinction, but he certainly saw the great difference. And to have seen this distinction at a time when one man could say, and a school of thought could practically believe, that the 'brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile,'⁵ was a very important advance for thought, and, indeed, the first great step toward a true philosophy of mind which should recognize man's power of self-consciousness as that which marks him off from all other orders of terrestrial existence. To Jacobi, then, man is not merely a higher species of animal, not a member of a mechanical order of nature, not a monad or member of a graduated order, as with Leibniz, but, in view of his reason and his knowledge, he is something absolutely different from nature. Jacobi reached, in fact, the modern point of view, in which it is held that the knowledge of nature cannot be itself a part of nature,⁶ and in which there is held to be a complete distinction between knowledge and nature.

The knowledge which comes through feeling in this way, Jacobi called 'revelation.' And in accordance with this he affirmed two

¹ II, p. 61.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 108-9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

⁵ Cabanis (1757-1808). *Cf.* Höffding, *op. cit.*, II, p. 300.

⁶ *Cf.* T. H. Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 11: "Can the knowledge of nature be itself a part or product of nature, in that sense of nature in which it is said to be an object of knowledge? This is our first question. If it is answered in the negative, we shall at least have satisfied ourselves that man, in respect of the function called knowledge, is not merely a child of nature."

principles: First, that "without all revelation (every original thing in feeling) man would stand in the series of animals, the most rational indeed, and first, but also the most essentially wild and unhappy." And second, that "without free use and proper understanding of divine truth, man would be degraded to a mere blind tool. And as a blind tool, to what conceivable purpose? and degraded wherefrom? Here vanishes all thought." But this revelation is not directly to knowledge, but to feeling (reason) and so needs careful interpretation. "The original revelation of God to mankind is no revelation in image and word, but a dawning in the inner feeling. . . . And the divinely imparted truth can, therefore, be misunderstood, it can be darkened and misconceived."¹

It will thus be seen that to Jacobi the first step in knowledge is the revelation or the experience of the self, which as a given fact stands above all proof or demonstration. Some principles thus need no proof, for all things which can be brought to proof are already in conviction, and need no proof. Such is 'I am.' This is itself immediate, and upon it all others depend.² The business of the philosopher, then, is not to build up or to deduce experience, but merely to give an interpretation of the content of the original revelation, or experience.

There are then two phases in man's consciousness, the conditioned and the unconditioned. The former is the element of sense, or of nature, and the latter the element of reason, or the supernatural. Of the latter we have a better idea than of the former.³ "One can call sense and reason the *material* origins of knowledge, and the understanding the *formal*. They are the organs through which the sensible and the supersensible objects come into human consciousness, with the witness, accordingly, for their objective validity."⁴ The understanding works only upon the materials of knowledge thus given, and out of these produces the systematic form of knowledge which can come only after experience. It is a *Nachsinnen*, and has to do only with that which perception brings forward. Much of the language of Jacobi in this and similar connections would lead one to think that he denied *in toto* the possibility of synthetic judgments *a priori*. He spoke of the necessity of the experience of the true as the prerequisite of the knowledge which is truth. This, strictly interpreted, would mean that knowledge must *always follow* experience, and that it could never anticipate experience.

¹ III, p. xx.

² V, pp. 121-3. Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

³ IV, b, pp. 152-5.

⁴ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

From this it becomes evident that Jacobi never saw the true nature of synthetic judgments. He conceived synthesis as but a form of thought elaboration, forever moving within a circumscribed area. He did not see that synthetic judgments can give a real connection of thought between data and conclusion, *i. e.*, can pass with certainty from the given to what the given involves. Had he perceived this he would have found synthesis just the instrument for his purpose, for he could thus have reached by thought what he saw no way to reach but by perception.¹

Faith, then, was to Jacobi a natural belief in the reality of the objects of knowledge which are revealed to sense and reason. Revelation is possible only in respect to real objects. Reason (faith), is the faculty of setting before us that which is itself true, good, and beautiful, with perfect certainty of its objective validity.² "Reason plainly presupposes the true, as the outer sense space, and the inner sense time, and exists only as the faculty of this presupposition. So that where this presupposition is wanting there is no reason. The true must therefore be possessed by man just as certainly as he possesses reason."³

Like Descartes and modern philosophy generally, Jacobi found the first foothold of certainty in the individual,—in the knowledge which the conscious self has of its experiences. "The root of all evidence is in the clear consciousness of a perception; we see ourselves only in a mirror."⁴ The presence of the true and the actual to the soul which realizes its own being is itself all the evidence which can be given or is required. This immediate union of the true with truth or with knowledge is the only principle of certainty, and by it alone being and thought hold together.

This recognition of knowledge as containing actuality is a very important point to notice; for it is on this rock that so many philosophical systems have gone to pieces. The Sensationalists made the internal sensation the only thing of which there was any certainty, and therefore found it impossible to give any account of the world of objects, either sensible or supersensible. Some of the idealists had made the idea everything, and were similarly unable to get a real objective world. While, on the other hand, the materialists, having made the object the only real thing, were accordingly unable to get any true subject, not even a subject for their real

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 31. *Cf.* Appendix to *David Hume*, "Ueber d. transzendentalen Idealismus," *Werke*, II, pp. 291-310.

² II, p. 11.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁴ VI, p. 201.

object. It would be too much to say that Jacobi gave a sufficient account of the problem, or that he completely saw the solution, but he at least pointed the way to Hegel and the modern logicians who see that knowledge is a subject-object relation, and that in the judgment the mind is related directly to reality, and that our primary judgments are founded upon this immediate relation of mind to its object.¹ To separate mind and its object is to make a division which no subsequent effort can overcome.

But Jacobi did not feel quite sure that he had established the objective validity of the judgment, against the older empiricists and dogmatists. He still thought he had to assure himself by the forcible means of a '*salto mortale*.' Having been entangled in the meshes of the subjectivism of the current empirical philosophy, and the demonstrative uncertainties of the dogmatic schools, he felt that he had not quite extricated himself. He thought he was on the firm and safe ground of direct perception in his doctrine of immediacy, but he could not see its relation to the earlier uncertain ground of reflection or demonstration. He thought that from the sphere of the understanding to that of reason there was no open way; to get from one to the other required a leap in the dark. When once a person finds himself on the dizzy heights of speculation, there is no way back but to cast one's self into the abyss of faith.² The understanding in its self-sufficiency thinks there is no way to the actual, but faith separates itself from understanding, and throws itself immediately upon the actual. We must say, then, that "therefore—this is the *salto*—every principle of mediate knowledge and wisdom must be false, and the opposite necessarily true, *i. e.*, there are immediate truths, and the knowledge of the objective being of things is one of them."³

The foundation of all knowledge was thus, to Jacobi, intuition or immediacy. The understanding, however, as an elaborate faculty, works only upon 'the given' of sense perception, and produces science. The unconditioned being is equally 'given,' but does not submit itself to the understanding. "All scientific thought is mediate, and presupposes an immediate which itself cannot conceive. . . . It is the $\pi\rho\hat{\omega}\tau\sigma\varphi\epsilon\hat{\nu}\delta\sigma\tau$ of the rationalistic *Aufklärung* to believe only what can be scientifically proven. Unconditional being can never be proven, but only immediately felt."⁴

It is evident that Jacobi did not admit that sciences could be made

¹ Cf. Bosanquet, *Logic*, Vol. I, pp. 76 ff.

² Cf. Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 632.

³ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 82. Cf. Jacobi, IV, a, pp. xxxix-xl, 59.

⁴ Windelband, *op. cit.*, II, p. 335.

out of the material of both kinds of perception. Science is possible only in the region of the conditioned, as this alone can be presented to the understanding. The knowledge which comes from the perception of the supersensible constitutes philosophy in the proper sense of the term, but not philosophy as a science. This arbitrary limitation of the word 'science' was due to the current ideal of exactness which mathematics had furnished to science,—a method which could be applied only to the sciences of nature. The unconditioned or the supersensible is, therefore, not a proper sphere for the understanding, which, as a faculty of the conditioned, can operate only on sense material. But, to Jacobi, the understanding remained the only faculty of explanation or interpretation; therefore, any attempt at a formulation of the knowledge received through reason must necessarily be by means of the understanding. In his psychology there is no other faculty to which this task can be allotted. He was therefore cut off from any systematization of the content of philosophy by his own view of mind. He was conscious of this limitation, and accordingly tried to content himself without a definite exposition of his doctrines of the supersensible, and to limit himself to little more than bare affirmations of content. This renders an exposition of his views peculiarly difficult, not only for himself but also for the critic. But he did not remain true to his self-made limitations, and as a consequence we have a rather full exposition of some phases of his philosophy. This is particularly true of his later writings, where, to some extent, he got beyond his earlier limitations. But at present we are concerned not with the content, but only with the form of his immediacy.

Jacobi's faith may be called 'Natural Faith,' as distinguished from Kant's 'Rational Faith.' Jacobi's 'faith' is directed to a certain given actuality, which is revealed to us immediately. Kant's 'faith' is a certainty grounded only in our practical nature. To Jacobi, reason was immediate perception of the supersensible; while to Kant reason was no immediacy, but only a higher process of mediation than the understanding. According to Kant, the 'reason' which Jacobi conceived is impossible.¹ To Kant, also, 'faith' was not, as to Jacobi, the assurance of the presence of the actual objects, but only the belief in the far-off actuality of the objects. Kant's 'faith' is a faith which arises in Practical Reason, and as such is an inference; while Jacobi conceived of faith as a form of immediacy in which the objects reveal themselves to us directly. "Faith is the adumbration of the divine knowing and willing in the

¹ Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Bd. V, p. 227.

finite spirit of man."¹ For both, faith or belief was the end of philosophy,—knowledge must be transcended in the exercise of faith. But with Jacobi, philosophy must also begin with faith. For the material furnished by faith and reason as a form of perception is the content out of which philosophy as such is constructed. It is reason and faith, then, which reach the highest objects, while science or understanding is confined to sense objects. But the understanding receives the revelations of the reason, for "the consciousness of the reason and its revelations is possible only in an understanding."² Science, then, does not itself reach the highest truths, for these can be reached only by reason.³ So that "this part of mind [understanding] sees only with concepts what the other [reason] does not see; it is with seeing eyes blind, as the other with blind eyes sees."⁴

In reason, then, rather than in understanding, the supersensible objects are reached. And of these faith gives the assurance that they are actual and not cobwebs of the brain. Faith, then, contains the assurance: first, of our own ego, and its states, as the common basis of all our experiences, and the foundation of all our further faith,⁵ secondly, of the reality of external sensible things, the knowledge of which it is the peculiar business of the understanding to construct into the various sciences of nature;⁶ thirdly, and chiefly, of the supersensible world of God, Freedom, and Immortality. These are the peculiar and proper objects of philosophy.

This does not leave mind a mere passive function, a mirror, as Professor Wilde seems to think.⁷ Jacobi expressly says he does not regard mind as passive. Nor does his doctrine necessitate such a view. Reason, he says, is not a light, it is an eye. Again, he says it is no dead mirror.⁸ He merely makes reason an active faculty of perception rather than, as usual, a faculty of inference. But as perception is always regarded as active, therefore reason must be active. Then he assigned to understanding all the elaborative processes of the mind, which have usually been considered as belonging to mind as a whole. This, however, is not the same as making reason passive, but, on the contrary, leaves it an active perception.

Nor do we regard the interpretation of the same writer as cor-

¹ II, p. 55.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

³ III, pp. 26-7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁵ V, pp. 121-3. *Cf.* Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁶ IV, a, p. 211; II, p. 141 ff.

⁷ *Cf.* Wilde, *F. H. Jacobi*, pp. 48-49. *Cf.* Jacobi, II, p. 272.

⁸ II, p. 266.

rect, when he says that Jacobi is a Realist in the sense that he makes the object more than the subject. If we are to speak of Jacobi in this way at all, we need to remember that the principles and objects of faith are not 'objects' in the materialist's sense, but that, on the contrary, the supersensible objects of the spiritual world are to him the true objects. Jacobi regarded God as more than the individual subject; and in so far as God is an 'object' to the individual, Jacobi is a realist,—but he is a spiritualistic realist. On the other hand, he conceived God to be the infinite subject, and all other things to have their reality in Him, and, therefore, may be equally well regarded as a spiritualistic idealist. There is no warrant for calling him a realist in the sense of materialistic realist. He agreed with the idealists rather than with the realists in his view of the ultimate constitution of the universe; for he held that spirit, not matter, is the logical prius and the final meaning of all things.

The interpretation which the same writer gives of Jacobi's view of perception seems also to come short of adequacy. He says that Jacobi's doctrine of immediate knowledge "is really the attempt to rid knowledge of the thought element in it."¹ This would be true only of Jacobi's earlier expositions of perception, where he called it a form of feeling; but it is the contention of this Study that his later adoption of the word 'reason' in place of 'feeling' is a recognition, or a restoration, of the thought element in reason or judgment. The fact, too, that, while at first Hegel criticised Jacobi as placing truth in feeling, he later came to think more favorably of him, is evidence that Hegel recognized Jacobi as understanding by reason not only feeling but thought.² Instead, then, of attempting to rid perception of the thought element, Jacobi's later writings, at least, fully recognized this element. In order to knowledge the object requires the activity of the subject, and this is a thought element.

Jacobi's view of perception is, then, but the early crude form of the doctrine of judgment as a subject-object relation,—a doctrine which is now a common-place in epistemology. Earlier epistemology had separated subject and object in the very first process of knowledge, so that knowledge was defined as the comparison of ideas. Later it was regarded as a comparison of the idea with the object. Both of these forms left knowledge hanging in the air. Jacobi was one of the first to see, though somewhat confusedly we admit, that knowledge consists of relations in which subject and object are given in the one act of thought. Such an epistemology has no longer to ask and answer the impossible question, Is our

¹ Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 57. Cf. pp. 57–60.

² Lévy-Bruhl, *La philosophie de Jacobi*, p. 257.

knowledge a knowledge of reality? So long as this question was necessary, philosophy made no progress, for it was never sure that it was not all a fiction of the imagination.

The fact, then, that "in his psychology Jacobi made *Verstand* wholly subordinate to the two perceptive faculties, *Vernunft* and *Sinn*,"¹ should not be taken to involve the passivity of mind. For it must be remembered that to him *Verstand* was only a faculty of inferences and elaboration, and that, accordingly, *Vernunft* and *Sinn* are active functions of perception and judgment. It can be correct to say that "the object is not constituted for us by thought,"² only if we mean the thought of the individual; but the statement is misleading if it be meant that the object of knowledge for the individual contains no thought element. On the contrary, Jacobi held that thought (spirit) is constitutive of all things. He saw only less clearly than Kant that knowledge consists in a subject-object relation,—that in every act of knowledge the mind acts upon a given object, which object has its reality only as it is the expression of mind.

The part of Jacobi's doctrine of immediacy which most directly challenges the ordinary view is his claim that God and Freedom and Immortality are known in direct perception. Kant had left these objects only problematical in the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, but had tried to establish them in the *Praktischen Vernunft*. Jacobi was not satisfied, however, that what can be but a fiction to Pure Reason can be a fact to Practical Reason; and, having discarded all methods of demonstration, he sought to find these objects in rational perception or intuition,—a method inconceivable to either the senses or the understanding. Here, then, we see Jacobi adopting what he considered the only starting-point for philosophy, and, as we have seen, what actually was the starting-point of both Descartes and Spinoza. But Jacobi did not think the revelations of reason could be elaborated into a science, but must stand in their bare isolation. However, after coming to see that supersensible perception must not only be feeling, but also reason, he looked with more favor upon a systematic philosophy, and in his later writings, particularly in his General Introduction to his collected works, we find a more complete presentation of his doctrine.

Two distinct purposes are evidently confused in the mind of Jacobi. The first is to furnish a working plan of life,—a practical program of life and conduct. The other is to give a philosophical theory of life. Not that these two could not be given together, for

¹ Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

² *Ibid.*, p. 61.

it is doubtful if they could be kept apart. Theory inevitably has its effect on life, and life on theory; but to hold the two in confusion is not the only way of holding them together. His mysticism and his view of thought as abstract led him to fear to bring the wealth of rational intuition to the full light of understanding. Hence his early doctrine was intensely individualistic, and this he did not entirely shake off even in the latest form which he gave to it. He never could quite free himself from the idea that to bring reason to understanding would be to place it among conditioned objects, and hence to rob it of its spiritual character. But just so far as he was influenced by this conception, he failed to see the universal character of thought. In this, however, Jacobi was not conscious of trying to separate the spiritual from thought, but only from science, the sphere of the understanding. In this unwarranted distinction between Science and Philosophy, then, he did not sever part of our life from thought, but only made a dualism in our thought. But if there is to be a unity in man, there must be a unity in mental functions. But, as we have seen, Jacobi himself saw this necessity, and though he never healed the dualism, he made it of less and less importance in his doctrine.

In other words, there is a growing consciousness throughout Jacobi's works that these higher reaches of knowledge which he calls feeling, reason, and faith, cannot be different from, but are only higher forms of thought. As Hegel says, "How belief and intuition, when transformed to these higher regions, differ from thought, it is impossible for any one to say."¹ In other words, these functions as forms of thought cannot be regarded as bare immediacy, as Jacobi was inclined to regard them. Like all thought, they must be the joint product of immediacy and mediation, and as such are susceptible of the same systematic treatment and organization. If they contribute to our thought at all, they must submit to mediation in the very act of being taken into that thought. The same may be said of the immediate knowledge of moral and religious principles. If these exclude mediation entirely, then they should be quite independent of all development and education, and should be clear and distinct from the outset, just as the opponents of Innate Ideas saw, and as even the upholders of that doctrine came later to see. To be fully and completely immediate would be to have no relation whatever to the other parts of our knowledge, and therefore not to knowledge at all. It is evident, then, that what he claimed to be immediate could not be so in the full meaning of the term.

¹ Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 125.

If Jacobi's view of immediacy were possible at all, it would render *self*-consciousness impossible. At most he could have thought, only on the plane of consciousness. For pure immediacy means that thought has to do merely with the content, and not with the relation of the content to the self. But thought thinks itself, and this is what we mean by self-consciousness. All this would be impossible if pure immediacy were the form of thought. Religion and morality would never know themselves as such, but would be sunk in the depths of their very richness of content. All this Jacobi felt in a way; and only in so far as he got beyond the standpoint of immediacy did he formulate a philosophy at all. His limitation consists largely in the fact that he never entirely overcame this view, —never saw the true relations of immediacy and mediation in thought. He accordingly made abstractions of the two mental processes, and separated them without ever seeing his way to a more fundamental reconciliation.

Jacobi's service, however, consisted in showing that there is an element of immediacy in thought. Earlier philosophy had conceived that mediation was the only element in thought. For instance, Spinoza, though recognizing immediacy as the starting-point of philosophy, made no further use of it, except at those few times when it did not enter into his system. All the dogmatists had regarded thought as purely mediate, and therefore abstract. Jacobi showed that there was an element of immediacy in thought, and that thought was therefore concrete. But he did not see the full significance of his contribution, and therefore did not set it forth adequately, defining it constantly in its negative relation to mediation. Hegel, however, saw its meaning, and for the first time in modern philosophy, he set forth thought in its full concreteness. But the element Jacobi contributed was a necessary part of the synthesis.

CHAPTER IV.

JACOBI'S REALISM, OR HIS DOCTRINE OF ACTUALITY.

As a diligent, and generally sympathetic, student of Empiricism, Jacobi saw clearly that it tended logically to an idealism, which is called variously psychological or subjective idealism. The *a posteriori* methods of Empiricism Jacobi never called in question. Its strict individualism he considered the only philosophical position possible. For every fact, every truth, in order to be valid, must be attested by the experience of the individual. But from the standpoint of Sensationalism, what the individual knows is only his own subjective sensations and ideas. And, as Hume says, these arise "from unknown causes."

Accordingly, the problem which presented itself to the Scottish School and to Kant, and which they did not fully solve, was the same which to Jacobi also seemed the all-important problem, namely, to find some basis for our sensations and ideas, so that out of them we can construct a world of objects, sensible and supersensible. It should be recalled that Jacobi had reached the formulation of this problem largely from his study of the Scottish School, for he seems to have been no less acquainted with Reid than with Hume, and that he had the outline of his own doctrine formulated some years before Kant published the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* in 1781.

Jacobi reached somewhat the same conclusion as Reid, namely, that the existence of the external world cannot be proved by any line of reasoning based upon sensation, but must be given immediately in sensation, if at all. He thought he found an irresolvable conviction or belief, which attaches to sensation, that there is a real external world of objects which is the cause of our sensations and ideas. He held that this belief must be accepted as well founded, for only thus can philosophy make any real progress, or even get started at all. If this is not taken for granted, then all our ideas and connections are illusions, mere cobwebs of the brain, with no validity in fact, and hence of no value to us either for life or for philosophy. For unless truth be but the presentation of the true, then all is fiction, and hence delusion.

It was because Jacobi thought that the Critical Philosophy failed to meet the difficulty—did not give assurance of the world of objects

—that he found it necessary to oppose not only Kantianism, but all similar forms of idealism. These he considered to be all alike subjective. It was only after what he took to be the failure of idealism to refute Hume that Jacobi was led to make the most explicit formulations of his own views on this subject. These appear in the two criticisms of Kantianism: first, the appendix to the second edition of *David Hume über den Glauben*, written under the title, "Ueber den transzendentalen Idealismus"; and second, *Ueber das Unternchmen des Kriticismus, die Vernunft zu Verstände zu bringen*. The former, however, contains the best and most searching criticism on this particular subject, and it is also the one which best defines his own views.

It is in this sense, then, that we call Jacobi a Realist. He believed that there is an existence outside of thought, into relation with which thought must be brought. The understanding does not make nature; at least, not the understanding of the individual. To him nature is external and real, for to it the thought of the individual must conform. But, as we saw in the last chapter, his realism is not ultimate—it is not finally metaphysical, but psychological. He believed that, while to the individual knower the world is opposed as a true real, it nevertheless depends upon God for its ultimate being and constitution.¹ That he did not regard himself as an ordinary realist is seen by the fact that he called his view a Real Rationalism, while that of others he called merely Nominal Rationalism. These latter, however, have given him the name of Feeling or Faith-philosopher, and, as he says, this will have to remain.²

His criticism of Idealism largely takes the form of a polemic against Kant, and becomes at times very keen and searching. He was, in fact, the first to see the tendency of the *Kritik* in this direction. This is acknowledged by critics and historians generally. "If anyone has succeeded in discovering the weaknesses which were hidden in Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, and in the whole Critical Philosophy built thereon, then it would appear that that one is F. H. Jacobi."³ Pfleiderer says that Jacobi's significance lies in his acute polemic against the one-sidedness of subjective idealism, and abstract rationalism, and in his assertion of direct experience as the ultimate source of real knowledge.⁴ In the same spirit Harms remarks: "It is the merit of Jacobi that he was the first to show the contradiction in the doctrine of Kant, by the

¹ II, pp. 273-4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³ Zirngiebl, *Jacobi's Leben, Dichten und Denken*, p. iv.

⁴ *Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, p. 226.

solution of which mainly German philosophy has advanced beyond the criticism of Kant.¹ Kuno Fischer says that Jacobi was the first to see that the Kantian philosophy was pure idealism, and that it could not affirm the thing-in-itself. Thence arises the realism of the thing-in-itself, not as an object of knowledge, but of faith; not a dogmatic, but a natural, immediate, necessary faith which is one with feeling.² Jacobi says that Kantianism is pure idealism. Space and time are subjective, and, as all objects are in space and time, they, too, must be merely subjective. We think of them as external, but it is only an idea of externality, not true externality. This we must say of all empirical objects. Jacobi, accordingly, says that Descartes's *Cogito ergo sum* is the standpoint of the subjective idealist. This is a universal idealism, for it has only one side, 'I,' into which all things are sunk. It is therefore a nihilism of all objectivity, and results in a system of absolute subjectivity.³

These views of the Critical Philosophy were formed by Jacobi after reading the first edition of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, and were not modified by the second edition. Jacobi thought the second edition was not an improvement, but that the first edition really expressed the logical form of Kant's doctrine, and that the famous "Refutation of Idealism" which Kant added to the second edition was aside from the system. Jacobi believed that this refutation was called forth by his own criticisms of Kant; and to make these more explicit, he added the appendix on the Critical Philosophy to the second edition of his *David Hume über den Glauben*.⁴ But that Jacobi furnished the direct occasion of the refutation is not generally conceded. The occasion is usually thought to have been the book-reviews of the *Kritik*, notably that by Garve and Feder.⁵

Jacobi says that Kant showed that the old style of philosophy could not penetrate, nor go beyond, the clouds of sensibility, and that whatever knowledge we were supposed to have beyond that sphere could not be proved to have any objective validity. In other words, Kant proved knowledge to be merely phenomenal.⁶ This philosophy, which, as we have seen, Jacobi calls nominal rationalism, can then grasp nothing certain above the world of sense. If it attempts to do so, it grasps what to it are only shadows.⁷ He thought Kant was no more successful than Hume in establishing the reality of external

¹ *Die Philosophie seit Kant*, p. 94.

² *Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, Bd. V, p. 217.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

⁴ Cf. II, pp. 291-2.

⁵ Cf. Paulsen, *Immanuel Kant*, Eng. trans., pp. 232 ff.

⁶ II, pp. 16-17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 36.

objects. Jacobi thought that objects, according to Kant, can be nothing but subjective determinations of the spirit, mere ideas, and nothing but ideas. The empirical reality which Kant gives to objects really confers no objective reality.¹ The Kantian philosophy, therefore, abandons the spirit of its system when it speaks about objects outside us making impressions on our senses. For objects are only phenomena, and, as phenomena, are only in us.² Nor can anything be known about transcendental objects. The Ideas of Reason, at best, are but problematical, and depend entirely on our thought, and can never be the objects of experience.³

Yet the Kantian philosophy cannot get started without objects impressing the senses, for sensibility has a meaning only in reference to objects.⁴ Jacobi says the want of a real object troubled him greatly in studying Kant, for (and this is one of his fine passages) without the presupposition of objects one could not enter the Kantian system, and with that presupposition could not remain in it.⁵ We could never know anything about objects if they did exist, especially transcendental objects; nor could we ever know their relations to actual objects of experience.⁶ That the empirical objects which we know should have in reality this objective being, depends on our imagination, which is a blind power joining the before and the after. Our knowledge, then, has no objective validity, for it does not in reality refer to anything but ourselves.⁷ Even principles, then, such as Sufficient Reason, have no meaning in reference to real objects, but only in reference to phenomenal objects.⁸ It therefore reduces to this absurdity: that no objects are really outside us, not even the laws which we consider to govern our understanding. Objects and laws are all subjective, and have no objective validity.⁹ Words, then, must have a peculiar and mystical meaning, for they have been taken to imply a real objectivity. But if the Kantian philosophy were true, how could they ever have got such a meaning? Perhaps it is because in explaining phenomena we feel ourselves to be passive. But this is only half the necessary condition;¹⁰ for we must remember that causation is a principle of the transcendental,

¹ II, p. 299.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 301-2.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 306.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 308-9.

and not of the empirical understanding, and as such has no application to the world of experience. Here the whole idealistic system falls to the ground.¹

Jacobi likewise maintained that Post-Kantianism is equally subjective, and that, in fact, the half-idealism of Kant finds its logical completion only in Fichte. But Fitche's mistake is in taking the 'I' as the only real in the 'I-not-I' relation. This is the logical position, however, for a Kantian, though it is a mistake to take one as the only real, when the two are given together in inseparable union. They must both be real together.² But with such subjective idealism there can be nothing real outside us, and there can therefore be no faculty for such a non-existent. Sensibility, which should be such a medium, has no meaning. Against such subjective idealism, Jacobi opposed real objectivity, holding that things are actually present outside us, and that we know them with immediate certainty. They depend on no proof, but on faith, and faith cannot be proved. The certainty of such objects can be given only by an immediate revelation, and not by idea; for in the latter case we would be certain only of the idea, and not of the object. And this would be only idealism, not realism.³

We thus see that Jacobi did not regard thought as the one fundamental determination of all being and of all truth. All thought is an individual characteristic. All knowledge depends on being, and there is no self-consciousness where there is no self-being, *i. e.*, where there is no individual. The individual is the all. Reason is but the manifestation of that which already exists.⁴ Where unity, real individuality, ceases, there all existence ceases; and when we represent as an individual that which is no individual, we are introducing our own unity into a mere aggregate. The individual is the real. And "the indivisible in any being determines its individuality, or makes it a real whole; and all those beings whose manifold we see inseparably united in a unity, and which we can only distinguish according to this unity, are called individuals. (We may assume or not that the principle of their unity has consciousness.)"⁵

It is evident that Jacobi's starting-point was not knowledge (thought), but life. Very often he made no distinction between the two; but wherever he did, it is to be noticed that he regarded

¹ II, p. 309.

² Cf. Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 226-7, and Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 631.

³ Cf. K. Fischer, *op. cit.*, Bd. V, pp. 222, 223, 225.

⁴ Cf. Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

⁵ II, p. 209.

life as the fundamental, while thought is but a reflection of that life which is the primary real. The living thing is primary, and possesses the thought, which latter to Jacobi is a *Nachsinnen*. Before anything can have being for another, *i. e.*, before it can be thought, it must first have being for itself, *i. e.*, life.¹ Such an individual (a self-determining one) must be something in and for itself, else it would never be anything for another, nor be able to receive this or that chance determination. It must exert power in and for itself, else it were impossible that any result should arise through it, or even appear in it.² And just as is life, so is consciousness or knowledge. The latter is always a function of the former. "Life and consciousness are one. The higher degree of consciousness depends on the greater number and nature of the perceptions united in consciousness. Every perception expresses at the same time something external and something internal, both in relation to each other. Every perception is consequently in itself a concept. As the action, so the reaction. If the power of receiving impressions is so manifold and complete that an articulate echo rises in consciousness, then there arises above the impression the Word. There appears what we call Reason, what we call Person."³

Jacobi was not, of course, a crass realist or materialist, but rather a dualist with a spiritualistic tendency. He regarded objects as real, but not so real as spirits. It is not thought and things which are the terms of his dualism, but spirit and objects. Thought is but the internal determination of spirit, and as such belongs only to spirits. It is the activity of spirit. It is the thinker that is real, while the thought is but one of his activities. "What is body? What is organic body? All nothing, all a shadow and without a trace of actual being, were not form first given to it through substance, through a world of spirits; did we not start from the pure simplicity of life. Therefore, every system, even the smallest, . . demands a spirit which shall unite, move, and bind together,—a Lord and King of life. And the system of all systems, the all of being, is moved and held together—by nothing?—Would it then be unified?—If then it is unified, it must be unified through some real thing, and nothing has such reality but spirit."⁴ This realism, then, is not materialistic, but spiritualistic. Spirit is the only principle of unity. Yet Jacobi did not undertake to reduce body to spirit in any thorough-going way, but at times even seems to give it an inde-

¹ Cf. Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

² II, p. 244.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 263. Cf. Wilde, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁴ II, pp. 273-4.

pendent reality. At other times, however, he made it less real than spirit; and it was always to him less important.

It must be borne in mind that Jacobi is not seeking a basis for knowledge, but for being. It is not so much knowledge as being that needs to be explained, for knowledge is always but an activity of the real spiritual being. It is being, existence, that demands explanation. Being is to him the one mysterious fact,—the one fact he endeavors to understand. Its relation to thought is not the great problem, for he always assumes the ultimate identity of the two. Ideas exist only in the mind of a living being. “It is the office of the senses to receive and transmit impressions. To transmit to whom? Where does this accumulation of impressions occur? And what would be accomplished with such a mere accumulation? Plurality, relation, are *living conceptions* which presuppose a living being that can *actively* receive the manifold into its own unity.”¹ For him, then, reality does not so much belong to objects as to spirits. Hegel gave him credit for having worked free from the current conception that the ultimate is ‘substance,’ to the more adequate conception that the ultimate is ‘spirit.’²

Jacobi may be termed a psychological realist; for what he found in psychology he took as real and true, and as having not only subjective but also objective validity. He no more questioned its objective validity than he did its subjective.³ In perception he thought we have both the idea and the object. “In the first and simplest perception there must be the ‘I’ and the ‘thou,’ inner consciousness and external object existing together in the soul: both in the same indivisible moment, without before or after, without any operation of the understanding, nay, even without in the slightest degree beginning the production of the concept of cause and effect.”⁴ In the same strain he says: “The decided realist, who upon the evidence of his senses unhesitatingly accepts external objects, considers this certainty as an original conviction, and cannot think otherwise than that upon this fundamental experience, all our speculation as to an outer world must rest,—how shall such a decided realist name the means through which he obtains his certainty of external objects, as of existence independent of his own ideas of them? He has nothing on which his judgment can rest, except the things themselves,—nothing but the fact that objects stand there, actually before him.

¹ II, pp. 271-2.

² *Werke*, Bd. XVII, p. 9.

³ II, p. 141.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

In these circumstances, can he express himself by a more appropriate term than revelation (*Offenbarung*)?"¹

For Jacobi, then, the object was not constituted in any of its determinations by individual thought, nor is its existence to be proved by that thought. Thought only discovers the object, and itself must conform to what it finds. He could not understand the idealistic position, for to him thought is always the thought of the empirical subject. His view is always psychological, and but seldom if ever rises beyond that to the ontological. His thought remained, therefore, dualistic, quite as much as realistic. Objects stand over against subjects; and though the subject is of the greater importance, yet in knowledge it must conform to the object in a way which is not required of the object in reference to the subject. He was aware, however, that this is but the psychological or epistemological aspect of the case; and there is everywhere in his writings the ontological assumption that nature is only finite, and that spirit alone is infinite.²

In a similar way Jacobi treated the Categories of the Understanding. These he took as not merely determinations of the subject, but as first of all determinations of the object. The laws of the understanding rest upon nature, and what is not natural cannot be thinkable, or what is not in nature cannot be in idea.³ He did not deny that there are *a priori* elements in knowledge, but only that there can be any knowledge purely *a priori*, *i. e.*, in the sense of being before and independent of all experience. He seems to accept the chief Kantian Categories, such as Reality, Substance or Individuality, Causality, etc. All these, he says, have objective validity.⁴ An *a priori* concept, however, is one whose "object as an absolutely universal predicate is so given in all single things, that the idea of this predicate must be common to all finite things given with reason, and must lie at the basis of every experience."⁵

It is evident that Jacobi believed in a knowledge that may properly be called *a priori*, though, as we have seen, not in the Kantian sense of being independent of all experience. To Jacobi *a priori* meant that element of knowledge which the mind itself furnishes. But this element enters only into concrete experience. "The material of the *a priori* concepts is given in the immediate perception."⁶

¹ II, pp. 165-6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 208-9.

³ Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

⁴ II, pp. 214-5. Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, pp. 163 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 207.

⁶ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 165. Cf. Jacobi, II, pp. 213-215.

Again, "the *a priori* concepts rest, as generally all knowledge, upon the Positive, *i. e.*, upon Faith and Revelation."¹ It would thus appear that to Jacobi the *a priori* elements are quite necessary to knowledge. But, as we have seen, he made a real advance upon Kant in holding that the *a priori* part of knowledge is an element *in* knowledge, and indeed in all knowledge, rather than a part of our knowledge which is independent of experience. To Jacobi, any knowledge whatever depends not only on the universal element, but just as much upon the particular.² The universal principles are but the essential *forms* of our thought, to which every particular idea or judgment must conform in order to be taken into the universal or transcendental consciousness.³ They are not, however, merely subjective forms to which the objective reality must conform, but are themselves also really objective.⁴ Thus Jacobi saw what Kant did not see, that unless these forms are also objective, external nature cannot really be presented under them, and hence can have no meaning for the subject. Hume had denied the objective validity of these principles, and had said that they were merely illusions of the subject; Kant had affirmed their subjective validity, and considered that, therefore, the understanding could order nature according to them; but Jacobi saw that in order that there may be a union of subject and object in the process of knowledge, these principles must be both subjective and objective.⁵

This shows us, then, the nature of Jacobi's realism. The object is just as real as the subject in the actual experience of the individual. The object as well as the subject must be the bearer of these principles which enter into knowledge. The real is the actual, that is, that which has both internal and external existence, that which is both thought and being. Every truth is but the reflection of the true; every conception of beauty and goodness, but the reflection of the beautiful and the good. And only in intuition can these be known. Whatever is given in intuition, then, is true. This conception Jacobi had from early life, for he says that always a demonstration which did not give an intuition of the actual meant but little to him. Therefore, he says, he was blind and insensible.⁶ The real, then, is given in perception rather than in thought or in ratiocination. Perception is real because it gives both thought and

¹ II, pp. 213-215.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 304-5. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 306-7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 300; also pp. 215-7.

⁵ Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁶ II, p. 178.

being.¹ Thus there is reached through the sensibility a reality which the understanding by means of its faculty of imagination cannot reach. Conception cannot give objectivity; this is found only in perception, where alone actuality is given.² In the same way, reason (faith) as a form of perception creates no concepts, builds no system, passes no judgments, but, like the external sense, merely reveals, and positively makes known.³

Jacobi thus endeavored to keep idea and object together from the outset. Ideas in consciousness and objective truth are given in the same moment. For no sooner is a separation made between the two, than an insoluble problem is given to philosophy. Jacobi well knew this Achilles's heel of philosophy, and that it left all our knowledge merely ideas. There, then, began his '*salto mortale*.' Either our knowledge is mere consciousness, and mere changes of consciousness, and all our ideas, 'I' not less than 'not-I,' are mere images or projections of our own consciousness, or all our knowledge is, in point of existence, a subjectively absolute identity of the real and the ideal, and is a certainty of both objective reality and subjective being. The first is absurd, and the latter is, therefore, declared to be the true conception. He accordingly says that he experiences not only that he himself is, but that objects exist outside him, in the same indivisible moment.⁴ The '*salto mortale*' is seen to be, then, the bold leap from the subjectivity of the old systems, or that of idealism which finds truth only in ideas, to that form of philosophy which finds that the truth in fact and the true in reality are one and the same thing. It is a leap from the subjectivity of the idea to that reality which combines the subjectivity and the objectivity in the one fact of perception.

But while Jacobi avoided the error of saying that knowledge consists in the correspondence of our ideas with the objects (a process which it would take another idea to determine, and so on *ad infinitum*), he did, however, fall into the equally serious error of limiting our knowledge to what we can directly perceive. This led him into the difficulty of seeming to deny to the understanding even the faculty of elaboration which he had already ascribed to it. For if all knowledge is in intuition, then all the ideas produced by the understanding must be but cobwebs of the brain. Before such a criterion of truth all laws and all principles both of science and of

¹ II, p. 263.

² *Ibid.*, p. 232.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁴ Cf. Kuhn, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁵ II, pp. 174-5.

philosophy must vanish; and even the categories of the understanding, which, as we have seen, Jacobi was ready to accept, must be taken as fictions. For Hume is not the only one who would say that he was never able to *perceive* cause and effect (causality), or any other such relation. But this difficulty Jacobi did not seem to recognize fully, for he has not even given it a formal discussion.

Another argument against the idealists comes to light at this point. Jacobi wished to take them also on their own ground; and from this standpoint he tried to show the insufficiency of the idealistic position, and at the same time the inconsistencies of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. He insisted that we must consider every conception as having a valid origin somewhere—a father as well as a mother. As words rest on conceptions, so conceptions rest on perceptions of either the outer or the inner sense.¹ Materialism and Idealism are, therefore, both one-sided. He commended Fichte, and seems to have regarded him for a time as the true Messiah of speculative reason, who showed the two principles, the 'I' and the 'not-I,' which are alternately denied by materialism and by idealism.² In this connection he says that dualism is the only possible philosophy, although from the ontological standpoint he seems to believe that materialism must find its final explanation in spiritualism. He knew of no kind of idealism but subjective idealism, which he regarded as too highly speculative for a philosophy; for it involved, to his way of thinking, a sinking of all objectivity into the abyss of the ego. Accordingly, he criticised the monism of Spinoza, in which thought and extension are united in an unknowable and unintuitable substance, which can be reached only speculatively, and hence can have no philosophical value.³

He further argued against the idealists on much the same line as Kant in his "Refutation of Idealism," though he showed that this line of argument could mean but little from Kant's point of view. He understood the true to be something which first gives value to knowing and the faculty of knowing.⁴ "Perception presupposes the perceptible, reason presupposes the true; it is the faculty of the presupposition of the true. A reason which does not presuppose the true is nothing."⁵ He thought there is something in man which opposes an absolutely subjective doctrine, a complete idealism;

¹ II, pp. 218-9.

² III, p. 9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵ *Ibid.*

though some seem to be satisfied (and here he refers especially to Kant) if only the name of objects remains.¹

It is in criticism that Jacobi's real strength appears, and he has devoted especial care to an examination of Kant's *Kritik*. To Kant, Space and Time are not consciously in the mind without or before all objects; and, therefore, on his own theory they are not mere *forms* of intuition, but are intuitions.² Such an *a priori* view of time as Kant supposes is impossible, for it would be empty and immovable, whereas the time we know changes and moves. The time which Kant conceives would be like the infinite sea, whose waves, however, would belong to some particular time, which would not be the *a priori* time.³ Again, space is to Kant an idea, and hence cannot be conceived as an origin of ideas or concepts. The *a priori* space idea is unthinkable, for it is a space with no objects, no corporeal nature, but only pure space. That is, in thinking Kant's *a priori* space, mind must think a thought which has no content.⁴ And as space is an idea, bodies in space can be only ideas, and hence can have no essential externality, though they may have associated with them the further 'idea' of externality. Nor is the remainder of the *Kritik* any less idealistic. For as reason does not give objects, the only objects given to the understanding will be those given by sensibility.⁵ Both reason and understanding, therefore, depend upon sensibility for their objects. But as space and time are forms of sensibility and not of objects, there can be no spatial and temporal objects. Even the objects of sensibility, then, are reduced to ghosts, —mere appearances of nothing that appears.⁶ This leaves but a problematical object, and therefore a problematical subject; for the subject also will have no ground of existence.⁷ The manifoldness and unity of which Kant speaks are then only 'substantial forms' of thought and being, and give no genuine reality.⁸

Again, the three *a priori* unities, space, time, and consciousness, are thereby infinite. How, then, can they ever become finite, *i. e.*, how can they become particular spaces, times, and consciousnesses?⁹ These likewise do not lend themselves to an idealistic system, for they are three independent concepts, and therefore cannot be reduced to one. Idealism would require all to be merged into con-

¹ II, pp. 76-7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 78.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 137-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 110-1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

sciousness ; but space and time cannot be so reduced.¹ Moreover, they are three identities, and do not give objects till the understanding acts on them, *i. e.*, they require a fourth unity which is not forthcoming.² Reason also rests on understanding, while understanding rests on imagination, and imagination on sense, and sense seems in turn to rest again on imagination. But what does the imagination rest on? It is like the old story of the world resting on the elephant, and the elephant resting on the tortoise, and so on. So the whole is created by the imagination, which is the true tortoise. The difficulty is to get the imagination started.³

Jacobi, however, in his desire to correct the subjectivity of Kant's theory, made the common mistake of going too far in the other direction. Not being satisfied to say that Space and Time must be more than mere thought-forms, he insisted that they are forms of objects as well as forms of thought. In this way, from the idealism of Kant he swung over to an apparent realism. He has thus helped us to see that Space and Time must be conceived as reciprocally objective and subjective, so far as the individual is concerned. But the ontological problem goes deeper, and demands the explanation of one sphere in terms of the other, in which case idealism seems to be the only line of possibility, though the last word has not been spoken, and the final theory is still to be given.

We can readily see from this that Jacobi's realism is not a crude realism, and much less is it a form of materialism. In the last analysis he must prove to be rather an idealist, as we now understand idealism. For he regarded spirit as that by which and for which all objects exist, and further maintained that the world is rational throughout, though not in the sense of reason as a form of understanding. He is, therefore, no more a realist than is anyone who does not hold to subjective idealism.⁴ He is not so much of a realist as Spinoza ; for, as Hegel says, it is Jacobi's merit to have seen that the Absolute is not Substance, but Spirit.⁵ Nor is he more of a realist than Kant, for whatever be the logical form of the Critical Philosophy, it is evident that Kant did not mean to deny reality to objects. But Jacobi did not comprehend Kant's philosophical method, and so was forever unable to see anything but the letter of Kant's treatment of his problems. He did not allow

¹ II, pp. 134-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 116, 117.

⁴ Hegel, *Werke*, Bd. XVII, p. 9.

⁵ It is a mistake to regard him, as Professor Wilde apparently does, as a typical realist. His work is really a contribution to the development of German Idealism ; for idealism better expresses his deepest thought.

for the mechanical and dogmatic character of Kant's training, and hence of his thought and expression.

As we have already pointed out, Jacobi, in common with his age, applied the word 'Idealism' only to that type of philosophy which we now call subjective idealism. To this he was opposed, but not more so than was Kant. From our present standpoint, this would be nihilism rather than idealism; for not only would it compel a denial of all objects outside the thinking self, but this self would, moreover, be swept away. Nothing would be left but the psychological content of the mind, with no mind of which it was the content. This method of reducing matter to mental content would be but little better, logically, than the opposite method of reducing mind to matter. The one would be a bare idealism, and the other a blank materialism.

A true idealism would rather hold that the universe is an all-embracing system of thought-relations, *i. e.*, relations which may be thought to their inmost centre, relations which submit themselves to the complete penetration of thought. This means that all the parts of the universe are so interrelated that their entire significance is seen only in all the parts, *i. e.*, in their relations to the whole. No part is itself only, but each has its being also in every other part. The universe is then rational through and through, and its meaning is entirely interpretable in terms of thought. All objects and all persons have their meaning in reference to all other objects and persons. Everything is active, and must function in reference to all other things. The meaning of each will be seen in its function. What it does will let us into the secret of what it is, and its functional significance will be but another name for its nature. All parts and all objects and all persons, then, become ideal, *i. e.*, they have a significance for thought, and hence for being.

It may be said that this was the very doctrine that Jacobi denied. This, I think, is a misunderstanding. When he denied that all reality could be thought, he had in mind only the limiting finite thought of the understanding, which, as he conceived it, was but a faculty of inferences and phenomena. And though he said at first that the infinite was known only to feeling, he came later to see that this really is not different from thought in its highest manifestations, and so adopted the word 'reason' to denote this activity of the self. But he was not sufficiently original as a thinker to develop an idealism, though probably idealism more fully expresses his deepest convictions than any form of realism could do. Not that he can properly be called an idealist. His philosophy remains formally a realism. But his affinities are rather with spiritualistic idealism than with any thorough-going realism.

CHAPTER V.

JACOBI'S METAPHYSICS: HIS THEISM AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION.

It was in fundamental metaphysical and religious subjects that Jacobi found his chief interest. These furnished the motives that made him a philosopher at all. Other phases of his doctrine were developed merely to enable him to gain a comprehension of these matters, and to enable him to set them forth in what he considered the true light. It might be said of him as of Spinoza that he was a *gottgetrunkener Mann*. The problems of Theism and of Religion he deemed the only subjects of pure metaphysical inquiry. And these were the subjects which occupied his chief thought.

Jacobi saw as clearly as anyone the failure of the old dogmatic metaphysics of Theism; and he made it his life-long endeavor to contribute to a more adequate view, to one which would have significance for both philosophy and religion. The old philosophy or theology, as Hegel truly says, concerned itself with "the notion of God, or God as a possible being, the proofs of his existence, and his properties."¹ Its purpose, then, was to find out what predicates could be applied to God; and its result was "the lifeless product of modern Deism."² The method of demonstration required the statement of some objective ground of the being of God, who would then appear to be derived from something else. There is in this method no possible passage from the finite to the infinite. God, for such a system, becomes either the totality of the finite, which is Pantheism, or the essence of subjectivity set over against objectivity, which is Dualism. On this level it was likewise impossible to give any account of the attributes of God; for he was conceived as pure reality, as indeterminate being. He was, however, given certain properties which were conceived to grow out of his relation to the world. These were, therefore, external, and an enumeration could be given only *ab extra*. But it will be noticed that this method involves the assumption of a starting-point, and the deduction of other truths from this. This form of theology, then, started with a 'given,' and by deducing God therefrom really made him depend upon other terms than himself. This reverses the result aimed at;

¹ Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, pp. 71-72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

for instead of making God the ground of all things, it really makes him dependent upon all else.¹

This was the Theism and the Demonstration against which Jacobi framed his philosophical doctrines. He felt no less strongly than Hegel, though he saw less clearly, that this sort of doctrine was inadequate to either philosophy or religion. It had no philosophical value, for the reasoning was manifestly unsound; and it had no religious value, for such a conception of God lacked all content, and could, accordingly, have no meaning for the heart and conscience. Jacobi's criticisms of this sort of philosophy are keen and penetrating. His line of argument proceeded by an examination of the leading philosophers from Descartes to Schelling, and we cannot do better than follow his own method in our exposition. From this we may gather together finally his principal doctrines.

Jacobi remarks that Descartes did not follow absolutely the demonstrative method of reasoning, which is usually thought to be his only philosophical method. On the contrary, Descartes started from an assumed principle, or intuition 'I think,' and an innate (intuitive) idea of God. Upon this he began to build his system. Not feeling entirely satisfied with the latter principle, he set about also to *prove* the objective being of God, evidently thinking that in reference to the Divine Being mediation was better than immediacy. But this appeared to Jacobi to be the weakness of Cartesianism. For it made the conception of God depend on other concepts *ad infinitum*. God can be known only immediately, and any attempted demonstration must be not only misleading but positively false. That essence whose being needs to be proved is not God, and any such method of proof is therefore but a form of atheism. Thus, proceeding from human knowledge, we make God dependent upon the 'I,' which sets itself upon the throne, and makes God dependent upon itself.²

To Spinozism Jacobi devoted more of his attention, for he considered it the greatest foe of Theism. He regarded Spinozism as the phoenix which arose out of the ashes of Cartesianism, and which became the complete Cartesianism. Descartes had treated the *being* of God as a property which proceeds from thought, *i. e.*, he had derived the being from the thought, after he had earlier derived the thought from the being. Spinoza, then, drew but the inevitable conclusion that thought and being are ultimately one.³ He did not,

¹ Cf., *loc. cit. et passim.*

² Kuhn, *Jacobi und die Philos. seiner Zeit*, pp. 82-3.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

however, attempt to resolve the dualism in finite existence, but left mind and matter independent for experience, postulating their unity in an ultimate substance, thus getting rid of the absurd idea of a chaos. He also abandoned the idea of a development of thought and extension from one substance,¹ considering the two as eternally distinct, though logically united in the one eternal substance.

But a natural explanation of the being of finite and successive things can as little be given on his theory as on the older. For he must posit an eternal time, as infinite finiteness, though he tries to say that the absurdity of this is only in the imagination and not in the reason.² He had, therefore, to choose between a Being and a Becoming; and he chose the Being.³ His universe became static, and he so conceived it as to deny not so much God as the world.⁴ He resolved the finite world into God by making the infinite universe itself God. As Hegel remarks in the same connection, Spinoza is not so much an atheist as an acosmist.⁵

Though Jacobi regarded this identity of thought and extension as invalid because not intuitable, he nevertheless commended Spinoza for setting forth, as needing no proof, the double principle that the thinking essence can as little be a result or modification of the extended essence, as *vice versa*. Accordingly, the extended essence cannot be considered as the stuff to which the thinking essence imparts form, as with Plato to whom the soul is the cause and in general the first. To Spinoza, on the other hand, the extended essence is the objective or formal being, the proper real; and the thinking essence is only that which in a measure thinks the real being; for conceptions are but reflexes of things. Spinozism, therefore, is materialistic; for it allows the thinking essence to think only of the material, extended essence.⁶ Accordingly, Jacobi says, that in spite of his professed opposition of thought and extension, Spinoza leaves mind merely mechanical, and the universe atheistic.⁷

Spinoza's initial difficulty is in passing from the finite to the infinite. Starting from the standpoint of human knowledge, he cannot find his way to the infinite; or, starting with the infinite, he cannot reach the finite. The all-inclusive God and finite individuals are contradictory; there is no passage from the one to the other.

¹ *Werke*, IV, b, p. 133.

² *Ibid.*, p. 136.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁴ IV, a, p. xxxiv.

⁵ Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

⁶ III, pp. 430-431.

⁷ IV, b, p. 134. Cf. John Caird, *Spinoza* (Blackwood's Philosophical Classics), pp. 262 ff.

Having individuals, *i. e.*, admitting human knowledge, there is no way by which we can rise to God.¹ But beginning with God, we cannot ascribe consciousness to him, in Spinoza's system, any more than we can ascribe to him bodily movements and forms and colors.² "The infinite cause has explicitly neither understanding nor will, because on account of its transcendental unity and completely absolute infinity it can have no object of thought and of will."³ And though Spinoza thinks of the first cause as having thoughts but no understanding, he must regard these not as particular thoughts, but as the 'original stuff' of thought.⁴ Thought or understanding cannot be posited of God, for thought is always a certain determinate form, a modification of absolute thinking. Moreover, all the various forms of thought are mediate, and, therefore, cannot be referred to the infinite nature.⁵ Substance, then, as infinite has no understanding, and likewise can have no will. Its relation to the process of the world cannot be that of an intelligence to its object, but merely that of a mechanical whole to its parts.

The points to be especially noticed in Jacobi's criticism are that he considered Spinozism to be atheism, its universe a mechanism, and its geometrical method invalid for philosophy. Faith is the only philosophical method, and is in no way a demonstrative principle, but a substitute for demonstration, which latter is applicable only to the mechanical sciences of nature.

Jacobi thought that a purely mechanical universe is not only atheistic, but that it is a self-contradictory conception. For if it be absurd to regard anything as absolutely independent, it is likewise absurd to regard anything as absolutely dependent. The latter would mean that the world was an absolute passivity; and hence could account for nothing, as things would have no properties whatever. If complete independence is unthinkable, complete dependence is equally so. Mechanism, in order to exist at all, must be but accidental and not constitutive of things, and must rest finally on self-activity.⁶ When we think of the world-ground as intelligent and self-existing, we have not so difficult a conception, as when we try to think of the universe as a self-originating mechanism.⁷ This latter, to Jacobi, appeared to be an absurdity.

¹ IV, b, p. 101.

² *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³ IV, a, p. 105.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

⁵ IV, b, p. 88.

⁶ IV, a, p. 25.

⁷ IV, b, pp. 147-148.

In order that providence, freedom, and other such human characteristics may be in the world, Jacobi thought they must exist first in the Author of the world. Otherwise we should have blind providence, free necessity, etc.¹ The world-ground must therefore be intelligent, and hence a personality. For unity of consciousness constitutes personality, and every being which in itself exists and knows itself as 'I' is a person. God therefore must be a person; and, as the completest and highest intelligence, he must be the highest personality. Only in this way can we ascribe intelligence to the world-ground at all. We cannot think of intelligence apart from an intelligent being. The opponents of this view seem to speak of the world-ground as intelligence without personality. But, says Jacobi, unless intelligence means an intelligent being, it means nothing whatever.² The world-ground must be able to distinguish itself from the world of objects, in order that such a world-ground may have any meaning for our knowledge, or be in itself anything different from the world as a whole. "God distinguishes himself from all things in the most complete way, and must possess the highest personality and the only pure reason."³ But God does not therefore have human faculties. "He, the all-sufficient, needs no organs. He is properly complete being in itself, and knowing in itself; the pure, highest understanding, the pure, almighty will."⁴

When we come to Kant, we find that Jacobi regarded his theism as more nearly adequate, though not entirely satisfactory. He conceived the negative side of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* to be necessary from the standpoint of science, in order that we might reach an adequate theism in the field of religion. Jacobi therefore thought the theoretical part of the *Kritik* to be directed against a self-deceiving rationalism; and that its great merit was in thus destroying the false, and thereby leaving a place for a true rationalism. Kant's sound sense led him to see that this would be transformed into an abyss unless a God were found to prevent it.⁵ Transcendental philosophy is not, and has no right to be either theistic or atheistic, any more than geometry or any other branch of science or mathematics. And so Kant's philosophy is neither.⁶ "That it knows nothing of God constitutes no reproach to the transcendental philosophy, where it is always recognized that God cannot be known but only believed

¹ II, p. 114.

² IV, b, p. 78.

³ II, p. 264.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁶ III, p. 6.

in. A God who could be known would be no God."¹ This interpretation of Kant, which regards him as conceiving supersensible truths to be undemonstrable, is the view to which Jacobi adhered throughout his whole career.²

But, on the other hand, neither can the understanding deny the objective validity of the Ideas of Reason. These are to it entirely foreign. If it were to deny them because they are objects of reason, it would also be compelled to deny the objects of sense, for both alike are forms of perception. Then there would be nothing left of objective theism or of nature, but only a formless content of images without objective validity or meaning.³ Kant, however, goes on to show how the theoretical reason depends upon the practical reason, and how the practical must be assumed to be true; for this is rendered necessary in order to account for the facts of the moral experience. This acceptance of the practical reason he calls 'rational faith.' In this way Kant thought he had superseded both Dogmatism and Skepticism by the Critical Philosophy.⁴ In the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, therefore, he subordinates the reason to the understanding, making it a mere hand-maid. While in the *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, on the other hand, he exalts it to a supremacy above the understanding.⁵ Thus Kant's doctrine appears different from different points of view. As a philosopher in the Pure Reason, he denies the possibility of knowing God, etc.; while as a moral being in the Practical Reason, he has room for a rational faith. The ethics undoubtedly represents what he regards as the higher and more ultimate point of view.⁶ To the pure reason, then, these ideas must remain only fictions, having no reality whatever; while to the the understanding they do not exist at all.⁷ To the pure reason they have no constitutive but only regulative function, and, therefore, no possible ground in experience.⁸ Only in the practical reason do they attain to the position of experiences. There they are no longer fictions, but are matters of immediate faith and perception. In this sphere, as Kant sees, the phenomena of the moral consciousness cannot exist without the reality of the Ideas of Reason; and reason itself cannot exist if its ideas are but cobwebs of the brain.⁹

¹ III, p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 340.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 371-2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 364-5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 369-70.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

Here Kant thinks there is in the human reason, as the law of its truth, an immediate knowledge both of nature as the real in general, and of its ground which is God.¹

But neither can the Ideas of Reason be proved; for proof depends upon something outside of that to be proved. It is a process of reference, as in geometry, where one thing is proved by reference to another. So if we wish a proof of the being of God, it can be given only by showing something outside of him, and upon which he depends.² As this is manifestly impossible, no proof of God is possible at all. It is this that Jacobi means when he says that God is known not by a conclusion but by an intuition;³ and that a God who could be proved would be no God.⁴

It would be well to recall at this point what we have previously said regarding Jacobi's view of demonstration.⁵ He never abandoned the conception that demonstration moved in an identity, that it was only deduction or induction, and therefore never got beyond the field in which it started. That is, he always conceived demonstration to be analytic rather than synthetic. He accordingly never saw the significance of Kant's method, and that it was the very method he wanted but failed to find. But it is scarcely to be wondered at that he did not fully grasp its meaning, when Kant himself did not see its full significance, nor the universality of its possible application.

Jacobi strongly approved Kant's insistence upon the personality of God, and commended him for the fact that to him the term 'God' meant what it had always meant.⁶ In this respect Jacobi contrasted him with the post-Kantians, especially Fichte and Schelling. He thought these,—particularly Schelling, against whom he directed his last work, *Von göttlichen Dingen*,—made nature God, and thereby robbed God of any personal or even spiritual nature.

We have now seen Jacobi's view of the problem and the development of modern philosophy. This was to find a place for reality, both objective and subjective,—the worlds of sensible and supersensible existence. Descartes had assumed the reality of the subject. Spinoza had ended by attributing pure objectivity to extended essence. This Malebranche, Leibniz, and Berkeley had tended to reduce to mere subjectivity, till a more incisive thinker (Hume)

¹ III, p. 363.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 367-8.

³ II, p. 284.

⁴ III, p. 7.

⁵ *Supra*, pp. 10-11.

⁶ III, p. 341.

suggested the same concerning the thinking essence. Thus the *cogito* of Descartes alone remained; the *ergo* was not expressed; and the *sum* was lost, and with it all reality in general. It was at this point that Kant undertook to reconstruct philosophy and to restore reality. We have seen that Jacobi regarded the attempted restoration of the sensible world as a complete failure; and he was not entirely satisfied with Kant's treatment of the supersensible. But he was still more in doubt, when he saw the development to Fichte and Schelling, though he did not think they represented the true Kantianism in regard to the supersensible. He thought that Fichte represented the logical result of the subjectivism of Kant, and that his denial of God was due to this relationship. However, he says that though he should call Fichte's system atheism, yet the atheism is, like Spinoza's, purely speculative, and denies the name but not the being of God, while the truth is really in their souls.¹

Jacobi's criticisms of the philosophy of Schelling will demand a fuller treatment, for the questions there raised are more fundamental to his metaphysics. They concern the question of the possibility of a natural explanation of the universe and of man. In his opposition to Schelling, then, it will be possible to find Jacobi's own views of man, the world, and God.

The philosophy of Schelling appeared to Jacobi to deny the personality of God, and, in fact, to make nature God. This results in a kind of Naturalism which necessarily denies not only God, but all things spiritual. It will not help the matter to call the original Reason, and regard it as blind, and then call it the Absolute, and identify it with necessity; for this would only show reason to be irrational.² This philosophy denies all the characteristics of reason, and yet wants to have its principle called rational. But a power above which there is no other, and in which knowledge, wisdom, and goodness do not prevail, is blind fate; and it does not make it mean anything to call it Absolute Reason. Reason is only where there is providence; and where that is lacking, reason is lacking.³

If one begins, as Schelling does, with an unconscious principle, Jacobi maintains it is impossible to see how consciousness could ever be developed in the process of an unconscious world. That which is now must have been in the beginning, and the original power of the universe must have contained in itself all that which now exists. "He that hath made the eye, shall he not see?"⁴ The thought of

¹ III, pp. 46-47.

² II, p. 49.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

such a blind universe gradually developing itself from all eternity, and at last producing mind, is to Jacobi completely absurd.¹ If providence and freedom did not exist in the beginning, then they do not exist now; and the God of Socrates and Plato, and of Christ, is but a fairy tale.² "If reason can exist only in a person, and the world must have a rational author, mover, and ruler, then must this essence be a personal essence. Such an essence we can conceive only under the form of human rationality and personality, and the characteristics which I recognize in man as the highest, viz., Love, Self-Consciousness, Understanding, Free-Will, I must attribute to him. . . . This decisive assertion Feeling makes for the religious faith." Again, "As this consciousness is the same as the conviction that intelligence is the only self-activity, that it is the highest, yea, the only power truly known by us, so it teaches faith in a first all-highest intelligence, in a rational author and law-giver of nature, in a single God who is spirit."⁴

But finite reason cannot develop from irrational nature. Either reason is of nature and is only the complete development of sensibility, or it is of God and is spirit.⁵ Jacobi held that reason is spirit, and is entirely different from sensibility, which may be a power of nature. He says Aristotle has made it clear that there are only two kinds of philosophers, those who conceive that the more complete proceeds from the less complete, and those who conceive the most complete to be first.⁶ The one makes it necessary to think that a purposeless mechanism produces goodness, beauty, and truth; while the other finds these in God, and the universe becomes their embodiment. Shall we then say that the universe arose from self-independent mechanism without cause or end; or does it pursue the good and beautiful,—is it the work of providence, the creation of God? The latter alone is theism, and was the natural faith of the world before philosophical science arose. Naturalism arose only with speculation.

It may be answered that nature is not taken as the mere content of all being, but as that which brings forth,—the absolute productivity itself, the subjectless and objectless productivity with is unconditioned either from the front or rear (before or after, *a parte ante*, *a parte post*); that it is not in any way the things produced—

¹ II, p. 118.

² *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³ IV, a, pp. xlvi–xlvi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, a, pp. 32–33.

⁵ III, p. 378.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

the infinity of single essence—or the content of all being; but merely the properly eternal and unchangeable being, the being of the absolute productivity. This holy, eternal, creating, power of the world which produces all things from itself, and efficaciously brings forth,—this is the only true and living God. The God of theism, on the contrary, is only an insipid idol, a cobweb of the brain, dishonoring to the reason.

In reply Jacobi asks concerning the works of this God: Are not these changes merely one and the same with himself, or only present in him; or are they also outside of him? If they are only in him, then are they mere changes, modifications of himself; and there is, in truth, nothing created except *time*. Thus, when we identify God with nature or the universe, we say that God is eternally the same in quality and quantity. It would, therefore, be impossible that there should be any change, unless he himself were the changeability, the temporalness, the reciprocity itself. It may, indeed, be urged that this changeableness is in its root an unchangeable,—the holy, eternal, creating power of the world, only in its fruit explicitly changeable, so that at any moment the all of the essence does not exist. Accordingly, it would be undeniable that the creative word which the naturalistic God expresses from eternity becomes nothing. He calls forth non-being out of being, as the God of theism calls forth being out of non-being.¹

“ And so we are compelled to conclude, without going further, that the manifest nothing is that which alone is true, or to admit the view as unacceptable that nature is all and that there is nothing outside of and above it. For so much is clear to every unprejudiced person, that if nature is nothing other than the holy, eternal, creating, original, power of the world, which produces and brings forth actively all things from itself, then the world, with all that it is at any moment of its actual explicit being, is nothing; that then the cause which brings forth the world that from eternity to eternity passes over from one form to another form of nothing, must itself be nothing in the same measure, as its effect is nothing. The entire essence of this cause is, indeed, nothing other than its effect; and it completes in every moment all that it is able to complete,—its to-day is not more complete than its yesterday, and its to-morrow is not more complete than its to-day. It, therefore, in truth brings forth nothing, but makes only an eternal change in itself, that is, as we have already seen, it gives birth eternally to time. To create this in an incessant reciprocity, this is all its life, and the entire content of its life. Only thereby does it live and do

¹ III, pp. 390-392.

all things which it does ; it has no higher aim, no content of life."¹

All this seems to mean that it is Jacobi's opinion that the naturalists' world cannot be a developing world, inasmuch as it really cannot produce anything above the dead-level of mechanical movement. This would not be a true development, but only an eternal change, with no more in the effect than in the cause. Naturalism, therefore, cannot account for anything above mechanism, cannot speak of God, of divine things, of freedom, of moral good or evil, or of proper morality ; for these would demand a true development rather than a mere change.

Even less could there be said to arise any consciousness which could in any way be called absolute ; nor could such a beginning even give rise to a finite consciousness. It would, indeed, be nothing but a form of materialism ; for since it starts with only mechanical nature, it is obliged to explain all things in terms of mechanism. And as Jacobi has shown, knowledge and morality both imply principles which are not natural (mechanical), which cannot be given a naturalistic origin, and whose operations cannot be explained as naturalistic processes. Nature is non-rational as knowledge is non-natural. This shows a faculty in man which is above nature, and different from nature²

" To this result have we attained, since we presuppose the concept of nature as an independent (self-dependent) essence which has nothing outside it as its cause, and nothing outside it as its effect, but which fully determines itself as both cause and effect, world and world-creator, the complete union of both. We found, as the basis of this, the monstrous thoughts of the identity (an *idem esse*) of being and non-being ; which identity, however, should be—not the identity of the manifestly nothing, but the identity of the unconditioned and the conditioned, of necessity and freedom ; in fact, the identity—of reason and unreason, of good and evil, of things and nothings."³

But the human reason rests on diversity in these conceptions, and demands the opposition and indestructible dualism of the supernatural and nature, of freedom and necessity, of foresight and blind accident or chance.⁴ Jacobi noticing this practical dualism, and the *Trieb* which he finds in man, maintains this dualism firmly, though he says that nature is that finite which stands in connection with God the infinite. He thus evidently tries to avoid an ultimate

¹ III, pp. 392-3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 397.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 393-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

dualism, though he sees no way to avoid a practical one. He says man's body is one with the mechanism of nature, but that his spirit came directly from God.¹ And just as man knows himself to be above nature, so he knows that above him is an all-highest essence, God.²

It is plain to Jacobi that such a universe as naturalism demands, without beginning and end, would be but a 'negative infinite.' It cannot be grounded in itself, nor explained out of itself.³ "But just as impossible is it to prove the contrary, viz., that nature is a work and is not God, that it is not creator and creation at the same time, not indeed the only essence. The conclusion which is drawn that nature cannot be dependent on a cause outside itself that brought it forth and must have begun it, was, is, and remains a conclusion which is false and without philosophical justification.

"By the manifold attempts which have been made philosophically to overcome this or that impossibility, the two opposite parties, the naturalists and the theists, have always referred in one way or other to the same fundamental principle, viz., that of the unconditioned, and always with the same reason or unreason." "That all becoming necessarily presupposes a being or a moving being which has not become; that all change, and therewith all time order, presupposes an unchanging eternal; that all conditions presuppose an unconditioned absolute; this truth, as an immediate presupposition of reason, or as a positive self-revelation has been recognized by all philosophers. They separate only on the question whether this Absolute is a ground or a cause. That it is a ground and not a cause is the opinion of the naturalists; that it is a cause and not a ground, that of the theists."⁴

This brings Jacobi to a discussion of the principles of ground and cause. A clear distinction between these he regarded as fundamental to a grasp of the truth. As we have just seen, he regarded it as the mistake of all the naturalists from Spinoza to Schelling that they have substituted the principle of ground for that of cause. The main distinction between the two is that the former excludes while the latter includes the idea of time. The former, therefore, if it were the principle of the universe, would render the universe static, as in Spinozism; while the latter alone would permit a development—a moving universe.

Disregard of this, that we never understand the term 'ground'

¹ III, p. 399. Cf. also p. 458.

² *Ibid.*, p. 401.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 402-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 403-4.

as anything other than the content, the all-ness of the determinations of an object, has caused endless confusion in philosophy.¹ There can be no time element between whole and parts, or ground and consequents, for the whole cannot be present before the parts, nor the parts after or without the whole. "With the entrance of time the concept of ground changes to that of cause and effect. As, however, the effect proceeds out of the cause, and both are in a necessary way joined together, we know only that, if we abstract the idea of continuous time, the cause changes into ground (subject), the effect into mere consequent (predicate), and both (cause and effect) pass into one another. Thus we explain the single and entire results of a man out of his permanent disposition, his unchanging character. Where we cannot proceed in this manner, and in our consideration get rid of time, there we attain to no insight, but acquire through experience, like the beasts, mere expectation of similar cases."²

Ground appeared to Jacobi to be the highest concept of the understanding, while the highest concept of the reason is cause.³ Ground is but the principle of composition, while cause alone is the principle of generation.⁴ Ground, then, as the principle which is used by the naturalists, has been seen to be insufficient; for it excludes time, and hence all development, or even change. A universe so regarded would necessarily be static. Cause is the principle of the theists, and points to an Absolute who is the cause of all things that appear, a God who is Creator and Lord.

Ancients and moderns, then, admitting nature and its changes, ask, Whence came Nature? The Naturalists reply by saying that it is a foolish question, and that they may as well ask of the theists, Whence came God? We may say that "the being of the universe appears to us necessarily as a miracle, as an impossibility, because the human understanding conceives as possible only what *becomes*, what can or could arise. The universe, however, is something which is necessarily eternal as the Creator. This last, that God has necessarily created from eternity, is not denied by even the deep-thinking theists. So the question vexes them not less than the naturalists: How the finite can proceed from the infinite, the many from the one, the changeable temporal, from the unchangeable eternal;

¹ III, p. 451.

² *Ibid.*, p. 452.

³ This shows, as we have all along contended, that to Jacobi 'reason' became more and more a form of thought rather than of feeling.

⁴ III, pp. 453-4. Cf. also, IV, b, pp. 145-6; and II, pp. 184 ff. Cf. Pünjer, *op. cit.*, p. 625; also Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

how such a process can go on incessantly. One may choose either of the two: assume with the naturalists that the unconditioned or Absolute which reason presupposes is only the substrate of the conditioned, the one of the all; or with the theists that the unconditioned or the Absolute is a self-conscious, free cause, analogous to rational will, an all-highest intelligence working according to ends. It remains, however, equally impossible in the one choice as in the other to explain the being of the universe as an origin out of such a First.”¹

We thus see that Jacobi regarded time as a factor in the divine consciousness, though he also says that in another way the Absolute is above time. The universe has not a temporal but a logical dependence upon him, he having created it from all eternity. A being to whom time is an object must in some sense be above time, though in another sense time enters into the very centre of his consciousness. That is, ontologically, time is his object; while, psychologically, he is subject to the concept of time. This is undoubtedly true of the individual consciousness, and probably is true in some way of the absolute consciousness, though, not having the same natural cycles as man, the absolute consciousness will not in the same sense be subject to time.

Jacobi regarded the object-subjectivity, or the absolute identity of being and consciousness, which was a phase of Schelling’s naturalism, as of a piece with Spinoza’s identification of the thinking and the extended substance.² To Spinoza the identification is necessarily unknown, and so is of no value to man in practical affairs. To Schelling it is equally unknown, and, as far as the individual is concerned, it becomes nothing. But Jacobi looks favorably on Plato’s doctrine, and in fact regards his own as one with it. The unity behind the multiplicity becomes, in his philosophy, a real being. The forms and individual things of the world are possible only because of the earlier existence of the ideas; and the multiplicity of the world is possible only because of the earlier *One* which produces it, and which is itself not multiple but truly *one*.³ Thus the multiplicity does not produce the unity, but the unity produces the multiplicity. The existence of ‘things’ requires a self-existent being who is God, a One who is the source of the multiplicity, and in whom it has meaning. “This Platonic doctrine is not further from materialism than it is from idealism. It considers the actuality of the sense world, its objectivity; considers the actuality of the highest

¹ III, pp. 409-410.

² *Ibid.*, p. 429.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 455-6.

cause; the truth of the ideas of the good and beautiful; distinguishes the supernatural from the natural, the created from the uncreated; the world from its creator; that is, it is decidedly dualistic and theistic."¹

We have now reached the conclusion of our review of Jacobi's direct criticism of modern philosophers from Descartes to Schelling. It will be evident at once that Jacobi's interpretation of these systems is sometimes inadequate. Especially is this true in the case of Spinoza and Kant. It is becoming increasingly evident that the deepest meaning of Spinoza is in reality an idealism, and not a materialism, as Jacobi thinks. In the case of Kant, Jacobi adopted the conception of the *a priori* element that was common in his day and for some time afterwards. But it is more correct to regard Kant's *a priori* not as something known before experience, but as the element the mind contributes to experience. Similarly, it might be said for Schelling that his Absolute is not so completely one with the world-process as Jacobi understands. But inasmuch as Jacobi's own views come out chiefly in criticism, it seemed best to devote some time to an examination of his criticisms. From this point, then, we shall try to gather up the main features of his own views, in a more or less systematic form.

Jacobi firmly believed in a personal God, and, accordingly, strongly approved Kant's insistence upon the personality of the Divine.² And, reverting to Schelling, he added that those who deify nature deny God. The personality of man indicates the personality of God. "Without a divine Thou there is no human I, and without a human I no divine Thou."³ He conceived personality to consist in will and freedom and intelligence; and that therefore, if we conceive the cause of the world as an intelligence or as a ruler, we must conceive him as a person.⁴ He readily accepted the anthropomorphism of Christian theism, regarding it not as a defect but as the necessary opposite of pantheism or cosmotheism.⁵ It is what has always been known as theism.⁶ But God is not therefore corporeal; yet he knows, loves, wills.⁷ There is no other kind of God, —no other use of the word is valid. "God is only God, if knowledge and goodness prevail in all his acts, if he possess a fore-seeing

¹ III, p. 460.

² IV, a, p. xxiv.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xlvi.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xlvi.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xlvi.

⁶ Zirngiebl, *Jacobi's Leben, Dichten und Denken*, p. 268.

⁷ III, pp. 422-3.

power and might, so that a purpose lies at the basis of all his acts.”¹

That there must be such a God is evident from what man finds in himself. For, granting man’s intelligence, we must allow him to have freedom and power, or else his intelligence plays only the role of spectator.² And just as man finds in himself a power which is above mere nature, so he has along with this the consciousness of an essence above him, which is not merely the all-highest, but which is God. This God is not a blind, all-powerful force, but the world-soul, who has will, knowledge, freedom, and love³ Nor is it enough to think of God as an idea in which centres certain conceptions; but he must indeed be a person in order to account for the fact of worship. Otherwise, worship would not be intelligible,⁴ for if man does not accept the true objective person of God, then he makes himself to be God,⁵ and his worship of God is but the worship of himself. If, then, there is no personal God, there can be no true religion, no adoration, no worship. Jacobi says he would even prefer the view that makes God an idol to that which worships only one’s self; for the former denies God only with the lips.⁶ Atheism would destroy all reverence, and so would disenchant the universe;⁷ for reverence cannot exist except for spirit,—never for a mere mechanism.⁸

Moreover, Jacobi thought that the highest aspirations of man indicate the objective being of these ideals, and this implies the objective being of God.⁹ Goodness, beauty, and truth, all need to have objective being to be real. “But the good—what is it? I have no answer if there be no God.”¹⁰ The problem of the existence of God, then, resolves itself for Jacobi into the problem of the objectivity of the good, the beautiful, and the true;¹¹ and the true objectivity of these he never doubts.

It is at once apparent that Jacobi regarded the relation of theism and religion to morality as very close. Faith must precede virtue, for faith is the foundation of virtue. With the disappearance of faith in God, virtue would vanish.¹² Religion and morality are re-

¹ *Zirngiebl*, *op. cit.*, p. 252; *cf.* Jacobi, II, pp. 49–51.

² IV, a, p. 59.

³ III, pp. 273–4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁷ II, p. 52.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁹ III, p. 33.

¹⁰ IV, a, p. xlvi.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. xlvi–xlvii.

ciprocal, and both depend on the being of spirit. Through moral improvement we are raised to a worthy conception of the highest essence.¹ Reverence for divine things lies at the foundation of all virtue, and of all sense of honor.²

Concerning religion he says: "The spirit of my religion is therefore this: man exists through a divine life in God; and there is a peace of God which is higher than all reason; in him dwells the participation and the contemplation of an incomprehensible love."³ There is thus in man a consciousness of a higher and of an enclosing being, and unless there be a God of whom man is a spark, then man's being deceives him, and the remainder of his being is a lie.⁴ This boundlessness of the human spirit which conceives the good and the beautiful to be outside itself must be in God, if nature is from him and not he from nature.⁵

Religion, then, is conceived by Jacobi to consist in an immediate consciousness of God, who is thought of as a great enclosing spirit from whom we proceed. This spirit we can know directly. God must himself be born in man, if man is to have a living God, and not merely an idol. Then man is able to feel God the same as he feels and imagines himself.⁶ In this way one has more than the idea of God, he has the actuality, the truth.⁷ The relation of God to the individual is an immediate revelation, and the content of the revelation is an immediate truth for the individual.⁸ This immediate experience is the only origin of truth, either sensible or supersensible. The former is called knowledge, the latter faith.⁹

Theism is to Jacobi first practical, a matter of immediate experience, and only incidentally speculative.¹⁰ Some writers have charged him with inconsistency for attempting to give any exposition of his theism, and say that all he could properly do would be merely to affirm the existence of God for his faith.¹¹ This criticism would be valid only if we should regard his 'faith' as entirely a feeling content. But, as we have seen, it is not merely such, for it tends more and more throughout his writings to become a thought content. An

¹ III, pp. 275 ff.

² IV, a, p. 33.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.

⁴ II, p. 44.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁶ III, pp. 277-279.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁸ Zirngiebl, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁹ Drews, *Die deutsche Spekulation seit Kant*, Bd. II, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰ IV, a, p. xxxix.

¹¹ Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 230-231.

immediacy of thought, then, admits of exposition, and indeed calls for it. What Jacobi does say is that God is not revealed to the understanding, but to the reason, and this immediately by a sort of inspiration. Without such an inspiration, there would be no reverence, no beauty, no virtue, no stars in the night of our being.¹ Nature generally, as in our breasts, partly announces and partly conceals God. It is only the highest essence in man that points to an all-highest outside of him. The spirit in him alone speaks of God. It is as such that we think of ourselves as coming from spirit. Otherwise we would have to suppose the living as coming from the non-living, and light from darkness.²

It was the view of Jacobi that nature conceals rather than reveals God; for nature is but a concatenation of causes and effects, without beginning or end, without either foresight or chance. It works without will, and without deliberation either for the good or the beautiful. Man alone reveals God, since he with his spirit lifts himself above nature. And as Christianity has set forth a personal God who reveals himself to man, it is therefore the only true religion. All else is atheism and idolatry.³ But his mysticism regards the being of God as incomprehensible; and he says it is the part of wisdom to admit this limitation of human thought.⁴

This revelation of God in the soul constitutes the basis of Jacobi's ethical doctrines. This knowledge of God is but a dim light which is meant to entice us on to fuller and more perfect knowledge. It constitutes desire; and the fulfilment of this divine desire is the fulfilment of the highest good. This, too, manifests God's purpose in the world. It is to create a world that he might show his love. Creation is only that God might will the beautiful and the good in order to love it.⁵ The purpose, then, toward man is to develop him to that point at which there can be a mutual love between God and man, where man will know God and imitate him, and where, accordingly, there will be love and consequent joy for both.

The spiritual faculty, or reason, then, constitutes in man the original desire and *Trieb*. Reason is a stirring, a developing faculty, and is above the mere natural, and masters it.⁶ We must have, in some measure, the revelation of reason in order that it may constitute a *Trieb*; for what is not in any way known to us, we never can seek.⁷

¹ III, pp. 293-4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 325.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 425-6.

⁴ IV, a, p. 71.

⁵ III, p. 274.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

And what this *Grundtrieb* of human nature, as an object of knowledge or will, strives after, men have always called Divine Things.¹ This determination or power man has by himself, by virtue of his spiritual nature. This enables him to raise himself above the animal part of himself by wisdom, goodness, and power of will. From this proceeds all virtue, which is an end in itself, and does not depend on the conception of duty, nor on the desire of happiness, but springs up originally.²

Man, then, as a conscious, active essence, is conditioned by a double external,—a nature beneath him and a God above him.³ The former he must overcome and subordinate to the latter; and this can be done only because he participates in a very real way in the essence of the divine. This furnishes his desire, and gives rise to his search, his effort. The need, however, does not reveal what satisfies it; this is seen only in experience. The experience itself, nevertheless, is possible only through a divine prophesying soul, endowed with an original foresight.⁴ But the activity of man, the original *Trieb*, is an expression of God, and this we call the will. The relations in which it finds itself (together with the like relations of things) are the laws of nature. The direction toward the finite is the sensible endeavor, or the principle of desire; while the direction toward the eternal is the intellectual endeavor, or the principle of love.⁵

As the moral *Trieb* is the truly proper human energy,⁶ it involves the freedom of man, or an ability to rise to the attainment of the objects of his love (or spiritual desire), or to express that which is one's inmost being.⁷ A conflict of desires raises the conception of right and wrong; for all cannot be gratified in the same measure.⁸ This sort of freedom, or “the independency of the inner power of the will, or the possible sovereignty of the intellectual essence over the sensible essence, is *de facto* conceded by all men.”⁹ This shows that Jacobi holds the supremacy of man over nature to be in respect to his moral power, his moral freedom, his will, “which is a spark out of the Eternal Light, and a power out of the Almighty.”¹⁰

¹ III, p. 317.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 318–319.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 440.

⁵ IV, a, p. 34.

⁶ V, p. 217.

⁷ Pünjer, *op. cit.*, pp. 645–6.

⁸ IV, a, p. 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 248.

Concerning Immortality, the third of the purely metaphysical topics, Jacobi did not say much directly. He maintained that the immediate intuition of immortality was given in the same manner as that of God and Freedom. He appeared to regard immortality as being involved in theism and in freedom. Having, as he thought, established the latter, he seemed to think the subject of immortality needed no special exposition. He took it, as Kant had done, as the necessary corollary of the religious and moral life.

CONCLUSION.

It is at once evident that Jacobi's thought was not very systematic, nor his doctrines well formulated. There is an indefiniteness in his writings such as one is not surprised to find in a writer who has close affiliations with mysticism. Hence it is to his general attitude and point of view, rather than to any definitely elaborated contributions to philosophy, that we can point in our concluding remarks. Some historians, indeed, have said that his importance is to be found entirely in his penetrating criticisms of earlier philosophers. But Jacobi is not without constructive importance, and his point of view has had considerable influence upon subsequent thinkers.

The empirical point of view which characterized all Jacobi's thinking, has become the point of view of all philosophy since his day. He insisted that philosophy is an interpretation of life as it is, and that what we have to explain is experience, all of which is the experience of the individual. In this experience, he says, we come into actual contact with both sensible and supersensible facts. In opposition to the sensationalists, he maintained that we know directly the facts of the world of sense. This is in accordance with the modern theory that judgment relates immediately to reality. And in opposition to the rationalists, he says that we know the supersensible, not by an inference, but by direct experience. This is his doctrine of immediacy.

But, in accordance with that mysticism which he acquired early in life, he at first regarded this experience as a feeling rather than as a thought content. Certain writers have considered this his final position. But there is evidence to show that he gradually came to see that this was a thought content. His substitution of the term 'reason' for 'feeling' seems to show this conclusively. And it is borne out by the fact that toward the close of his life he was able to give his thought a more systematic formulation, as is seen in his General Introduction, which was one of the last of his writings.

His view of mind as active, and of life and consciousness as one, lead to the conception that man is essentially spiritual, and the universe the expression of an infinite spirit. He believes man to be the forth-putting of an Infinite Person whose purposes are being fulfilled in the world as a whole, but especially in man who alone can comprehend both himself and the eternal. He believed that natural-

ism, such as Schelling's, involves the contradictory conception of a moving, developing universe that does not proceed from thought, and that is not working out the purposes of thought. Such a developing universe can only be the expression of a spiritual being who must be regarded as a person. But Jacobi's view suffers somewhat in approximating a transcendent rather than an immanent theism.

It has been said that Jacobi is a realist, and his philosophy has been characterized as the origin of German realism. But he is at any rate not a materialistic realist; for, as we have just seen, he is a strict theist, believing also that man's nature is essentially spiritual. His language, moreover, is usually the language of realism, but we find it easier to interpret his thought as a groping and imperfect idealism. We have seen reason to regard him as having closer affiliations with the idealists than with the realists, for his thought is, that spirit is the final term of the universe, and that all things have their being only in an Absolute who is spirit, and not substance. It is this conception, then, that leads us to call him an imperfect idealist, and his philosophy one of the springs of German Idealism.

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